



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

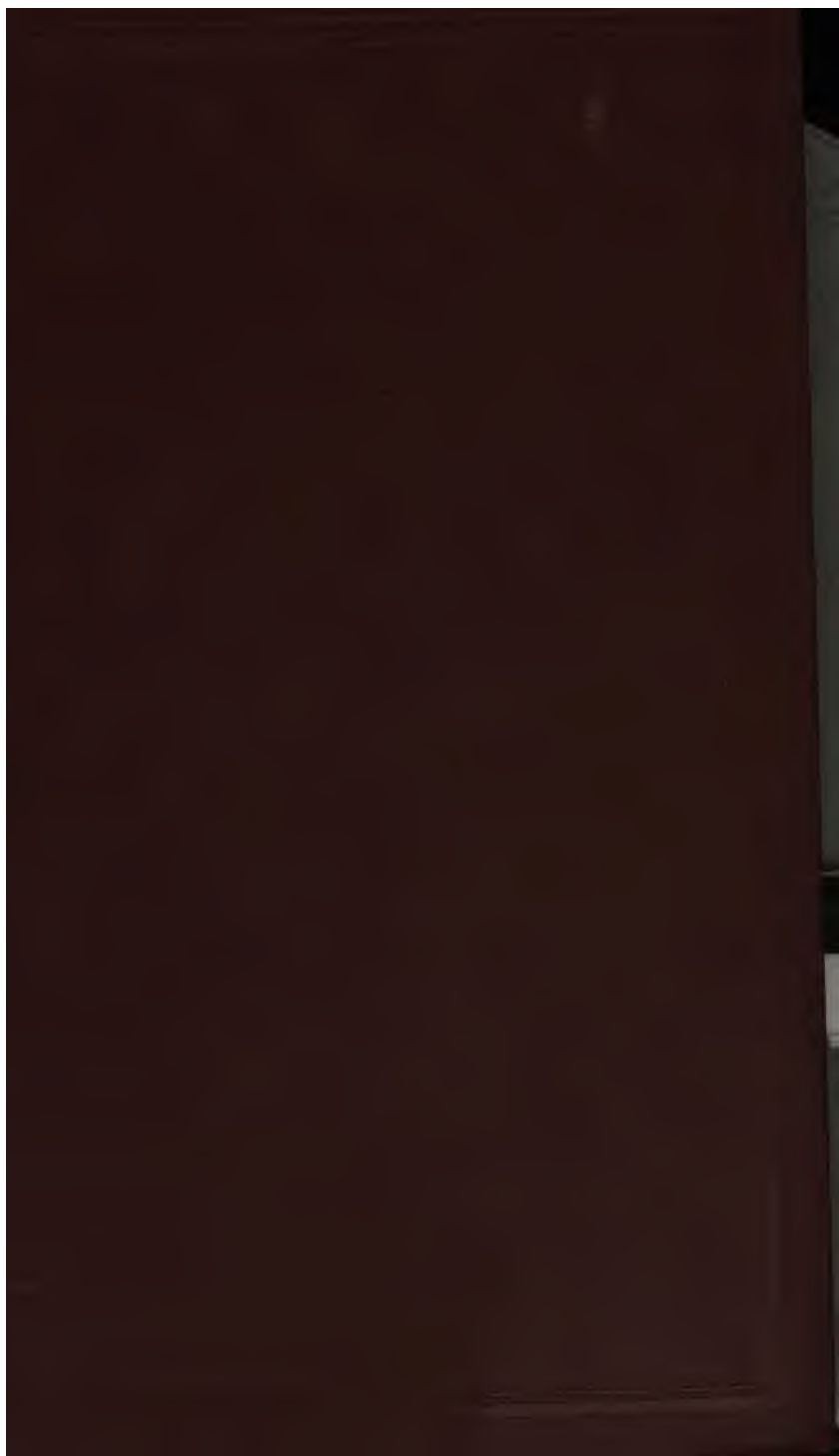
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





**SECOND-COUSIN SARAIL.**

**VOL. III.**



# SECOND-COUSIN SARAH.

BY

F. W. ROBINSON,

AUTHOR OF

“GRANDMOTHER’S MONEY,” “NO CHURCH,”

“LITTLE KATE KIRBY,”

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1874.

*All rights reserved.*

251. 6. 213.

**LONDON:**  
**PRINTED BY MACDONALD AND TUGWELL,**  
**BLENHEIM HOUSE.**

# CONTENTS

## OF

### THE THIRD VOLUME.

---

#### BOOK II.—CONTINUED.

##### TWO YEARS AFTERWARDS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX. THE PRISONER . . . . .	3
XX. THE TERMS OF RELEASE . . . . .	23
XXI. CLEARING THE HOUSE . . . . .	35
XXII. A CHANGE OF PLAN . . . . .	53
XXIII. THE RETURN . . . . .	64
XXIV. FORGOTTEN . . . . .	75
XXV. UTTERLY CONFOUNDED . . . . .	84
XXVI. THE BAD NEWS . . . . .	91

#### BOOK III.

##### MANY CHANGES.

I. THE UNLUCKY HOUSE . . . . .	103
II. NO PEACE . . . . .	123
III. FACING THE TRUTH . . . . .	131
IV. CONSOLATION . . . . .	141



CHAPTER	PAGE
V. TOTS' NURSE . . . . .	149
VI. THE "MAGPIE" . . . . .	165
VII. IN WORCESTER AGAIN . . . . .	178
VIII. EDWARD PETERSON LOOKS FORWARD . . . . .	188
IX. JOHN DELIVERS HIS MESSAGE . . . . .	198
X. A FEW WORDS . . . . .	206
XI. A PASSING TEMPEST . . . . .	219
XII. SARAH MAKES UP HER MIND AGAIN . . . . .	226
XIII. JEALOUS AT LAST . . . . .	233
XIV. CONFIDENCE . . . . .	242

# **BOOK II.**

**(CONTINUED.)**

**TWO YEARS AFTERWARDS.**

**VOL. III.**

**B**





## SECOND-COUSIN SARAH.

---

### CHAPTER XIX.

#### THE PRISONER.

**I**T is time that we follow the fortunes of Second-cousin Sarah, whom we left with her sister-in-law in the grounds of Sedge Hill. Taken off her guard by Mrs. Thomas Eastbell's sudden appearance, disturbed by the events of the night, and ever conscious of the danger which the presence of the two intruders in her aunt's house foreshadowed, she followed the woman in good faith some distance along the garden paths and in the direction of the high-road.

"All is safe here, Sophy," Sarah said at last.

"I don't think so—I'm afeared of him here," said the woman, hurrying on still. "Tom wouldn't mind cutting my throat for 'arf this. You know him as well as I do."

A few more yards, and then Sarah Eastbell caught the woman by the arm, and checked her progress.

"We will go no further," she said; "tell me what I have to fear from your husband and Peterson, and I will reward you handsomely."

"You was allers kind, Sally, I will say that, though you have turned your back upon us since they've made a lady of you," she said. "Is this quite safe, do you think?"

"Quite safe."

"It's dark enough under the trees," muttered the woman, "but then Tom has cat's eyes."

"Tom is at the house, and nobody comes here."

"Listen, then, as well as you can. I ain't a-going to speak loud for anybody."

"I am listening."

Sarah Eastbell inclined her head more closely to the woman, who began whispering about her husband in a rambling fashion that was difficult to follow, until she went suddenly back three steps, to Sarah's surprise, and stood gazing at her, or at something near her.

"What is it?" exclaimed Sarah; "what——"

There was no opportunity to say more, to scream or to struggle. Two strong arms closed round her, and a cloth, wet and sickly with drugs, was pressed to her mouth and nostrils by a merciless hand, that seemed to snatch her at once from active life to oblivion.

It was an incomprehensible world after that into which she passed, with strange whirring noises in her ears, and a terrible pressure on the brain, like a *soft weight*, bearing down all sense of reasoning or perception. Amidst it all

the faint odour of the drugs pervaded the semblance of existence that was left her, becoming weaker at times, and then growing stronger and taking her wholly from the misery and treachery by which she had been betrayed. She remembered no more. She was conscious that she lived and breathed, but it was in a wild dream, of which she formed a part.

She seemed to be moving without any power of volition in herself; there were times when she could hear voices; there was ever before her a dense mist, in which once she caught the glimmer of stars, and tried to pray to them; and then the drug again, and the awful feeling of lying like one dead, with the knowledge at her heart that it was only a death-like aspect, from which there was no power to wrench herself away.

When she came back to consciousness it was to a life apart from Sedge Hill, and those who loved her there. She was lying on a bed, with Sophy Eastbell dozing by the side of a scantily

furnished fire. There was a narrow window in the side of the room, with some boards nailed across it to keep the light of one spluttering candle from betraying itself to the night.

The smallness of the room, the meagre aspect of the furniture, the dirty boards and blackened ceiling, the torn patchwork quilt, the woman sleeping by the fire with her head against the mantelpiece, were all parts of an old picture, which, combined with a hot, close atmosphere, with the smell of lead in it, was terribly suggestive of a past and woful episode in her life. Sarah supported herself on her elbows and looked round her dreamily, the horror in her looks deepening as she gazed. Was she back in Potter's Court? Had it all been a dream of prosperity, with Reuben, and Miss Holland, and her grandmother, the fleeting figures of the hour, as false as the happiness which had seemed to be dawning on her life? This was so like the old home that it was possible in the first moments of waking to believe that it belonged



to her, and that the brighter days had only been a fallacy.

She had not been saved. She was the girl who had passed bad money, and had run away from Worcester to Tom's home. She had thrown herself upon the bed in one of her fits of despair, and had cried and raved herself to sleep, and—then her hand fell on her stiff black silk dress, and not upon a ragged cotton gown, and there was deeper thought to follow. How her head ached! She clasped it with both hands, as if to stay the hammering at her temples, or to think the harder between the heavy beats; and by degrees—it was an effort of some strength, with the old sense of confusion coming upon her, and rendering her giddy—she thought out the last chapter of her life, and where, and in what manner, it had ended in this chaos. The woman by the fire assisted her in her reverie; the haggard pinched face was years older than in the Potter's Court days, and years closer to the grave. Seldom had a

woman looked so near death, and been moving to and fro amongst the living, as this disreputable fragment of humanity. Years of life with Tom Eastbell and Tom's friends, years of penury and crime, and hiding from the police, had hardened and debased her ; she had fallen from her level to a lower depth ; one could see it at a glance. In the thin mouth, firmly compressed even in her sleep, Sarah Eastbell read no sign of mercy.

Suddenly Sophy woke up, and gave a nervous jump in her chair at finding her sister-in-law crouched upon the bed, with her great dark eyes glaring at her.

"Where have you brought me ? Why am I in this place ?" Sarah asked in an eager voice.

"You're come round, have you ?" said Sophy. "Well, I am glad of that. Blest if I didn't think they'd overdone it with their klory-what's-its-name, and sent you bang off to kingdom come afore they meant it."

"*They?* Who are *they?*" was Sarah's next question.

"Ah! that's it. I can't tell you. It's more nor my life's worth to say too much, and I ain't a-going to say it, Sally. I ain't a-going to——"

Her old cough seized her, cut short her utterance, and might have strangled her, had she not risen to her feet and shuffled about the room, fighting for breath, and flinging her thin arms to and fro in the contest.

"It's the night air, rot it!" she gasped forth at last; "it allers catches me so, Sally. It gets on my chest and racks me orful. It's a wonder how I've lived on all this time, ain't it?"

Sarah Eastbell was sitting at the edge of the bed now, regarding her gaoler with eager attention. The statement of the woman's complaints did not interest her in her own anxiety. She had not listened; she was scarcely back from dreamland yet.

"Why have I been brought here?" she asked less patiently.

"You'll know in good time, gal. There's no 'casion for a nurry or a flurry. Take it cool. You're safe enuf."

"Safe!" echoed Sarah.

"As safe as in your grand 'ouse, to which you never asked one of the family—no, never!" replied her sister-in-law. "That's where Tom and I felt it, for we *had* taken care of you. We'd sheltered you, we'd been mother and father to you in Walworth. You was rich, and he was crawling on as usual, without a soul to help us in the blessed world. S'elp me, not a soul!"

Sophy took this as a grievance, and stamped her foot upon the floor and raised her voice to an angry screech, until the cough caught her by the throat again, when she leaned against the wall with her hands to her side till the paroxysm was over.

Sarah Eastbell was standing at the door of

the room when she had recovered herself. It was locked, as she had suspected.

"It's no good your thinking of getting out, Sally," said Tom's wife; "don't build on that, or harm will happen to you. That's certain."

"Do you think I am the weak girl whom you remember last?" said Sarah, walking from the door to the woman's side, and clutching her tightly by the wrist, "or that I am to be frightened by this trick of yours, and of the wretches who have assisted you? Do you know in what peril you have put yourself?"

"Oh, yes, we all know; it's all been thought on," said the woman ironically. "We're of the don't care sort, and have chanced it. You can't say it wasn't well done, Sally."

"Give me the key of that door, or you will find me the stronger woman of the two!" cried Sarah.

"Don't ketch hold of my wrist like that," cried her sister-in-law, "or you'll be sorry for it. You'll be sorry if I go away, or if any one down-stairs comes up instead of me, because you are too wiolent for my company. You can't behave like a lady, for all your fine flash silk. I have only to skreek out, and there are three men below who don't stand nonsense sich as youn."

Sarah Eastbell released her hold. Yes, she was in danger, and must be cautious. They who had brought her to this den had risked a great deal in entrapping her, and would risk more rather than allow her to escape. She must be prudent and on her guard, not defiant and aggressive.

"I ain't got no key, if you must know," said Sophy, as she returned to her chair and sat down; "this is my room, and we're both locked in together. I'm to take charge of you, that's all, my gal, and think yourself lucky it's me."

"If this is for money, what money is wanted to let me go back at once?"

"Ah! goodness knows, Sally! I don't. We must wait till morning."

"Why?" cried Sarah.

"Tom will be here then, p'raps; I say p'raps—mind," she added cautiously, "don't mistake me; don't try to get anythink out of me; it's no use."

"Open that window—let me tear it open, and escape. I will send you to-morrow a hundred pounds, and my blessing on you, for your help. You can't be against me, Sophy. You can't wish me any harm."

"I shouldn't be here if I did," said the woman sullenly; "I'm to take care of you—ain't I said so? I'm your right hand, so treat me square. As for that window, silly, it's forty feet from the ground, and there's the river underneath to sink your silks and satins in."

Mrs. Eastbell's bile had been seriously stirred up by Sarah's costly raiment. The silk dress

was a deliberate affront to her own rags and tatters, and she resented the offence of her relation being better dressed than herself, with all a woman's bitterness of spirit.

"What place is it?" Sarah asked again wonderingly.

"A place of bus'ness," was the enigmatic answer.

"Coiners—the old gang from Potter's Court—the Petersons," cried Sarah.

Mrs. Eastbell did not answer. She warmed her thin hands at the fire, and a convenient cough prevented all possibility of reply. She was a prudent woman, and not likely to commit herself and her friends by responding to leading questions of this character. It was a very good guess of Sarah Eastbell's, though the captain's presence at Sedge Hill might have suggested the fact, but she was not going to answer her. "Least said, soonest mended," had been her motto through life, and though she hadn't flourished upon it, she had been the only



member of "the school" who had not seen the inside of a prison.

Sarah once again attempted to corrupt the fidelity of her invalid gaoler.

"Will not money buy your help against the wretches who have planned this scheme?" she asked.

"Sally," said Sophy Eastbell, with great gravity of expression, "there's no telling what money would do in my case, if I had the hopportunity—but it's unfortunit I haven't. I won't deceive a relation—I ain't got a chance to get you out of this; I ain't got arf a chance. And don't say 'wretches,'" she added in a lower key.

"What are they?"

"Working men. You mustn't hurt their feelings, for they may be a-listening outside the door, you know."

A gentle tap on the panels from without made good Sophia Eastbell's remark, and Sarah, still rebellious, ran to the door, a caged

animal that would escape its bondage at all risks. Her sister-in-law called out that Sarah was there ready to break through, after which notice heavy feet were heard descending the wooden stairs.

"You'd better take it easy," said Sophy; "you must bide your time—it's no use going on like this. There's been too much pains to get you here, to let you off all in a minit. This has been thought on for weeks, and only your going to London spiled their arrangements last Saturday. Now take it easy—it's the best advice."

"Don't speak to me," said Sarah, shuddering, "I will not listen."

"Nobody wants to speak—nobody wants you to listen," answered Sophy.

"I hope that I shall not go mad before God helps me," said Sarah despairingly, as she returned to her seat by the bed-side.

Half an hour later the hand tapped against the door once more, and Sarah started to her

feet again, with eyes blazing, and hands clenched, and her spirit of resistance to this injury unquenched within her still. Mrs. Eastbell screamed forth her warning again, but this time the knocking was repeated.

"You had better let me see what they want," she said to her captive; "you're safer here, I say again, than in any other part of the 'ouse."

Sarah resumed her seat at this injunction; the woman's manner was expressive, and though she distrusted her, it was probable that the truth had been spoken. She could make no effort at escape in this fashion; it would but resolve itself into greater oppression and indignity. She had better bide her time, as Sophy Eastbell had advised her.

She glanced towards the door as it was unlocked from the interior, but there was only a long lean arm, with a dirty shirt-sleeve rolled up to the elbow, thrust through the aperture allowed by him who held the key. There was

a rush of hot air from the darkness beyond—the old hot metallic vapour which Sarah Eastbell knew so well!—and then a basket was passed through, and the door closed and re-locked.

“Here’s supper, Sally,” said Sophy, with a rusty little laugh; “they are not going to starve us.”

“I will not eat or drink in this place.”

“It’s safe enough. You’re not likely to be poisoned.”

Sarah did not answer. She stared before her at the window, and at the rough planks nailed across it, and wondered what lay beyond them in the shape of rescue or escape. There was no sleep in her great dark eyes, no peace of mind or prospect of rest—the one thought, the one hope to get away, was overcoming the dazed feeling at her brain.

Mrs. Thomas Eastbell sat down before the

fire, with her basket on her knees, and partook of bread and cheese and beer, pressing her relative by marriage, more than once, to eat and drink, and not make a "young fool of herself," but Sarah took no heed.

"Good lor'! how much longer are you going to stare like that?" cried Mrs. Eastbell at last; "my flesh creeps to see you, gal."

The darkness of a blank despair had settled on Tom's sister, and there was no reply. Sarah was thinking of Reuben Culwick, and her grandmother, and Mary Holland; of all the anxiety concerning her, and of all impossibility of tracking her to this haunt. All had been plotted for, and prepared against, by Tom and Captain Peterson, and others; they had been weeks in hiding for her, Sophy said; there was a fortune to be made, they considered, from her capture and her fears—perhaps from her life. What was to be the end of it all—if this were the beginning of an elaborate plot against

her? If she could only see her way upon the unknown road a little!

How long she thought in this way, she never knew. Hours must have passed thus, for the candle burned low and was replaced by another, which had been brought in along with the bread and cheese. Sophy went to sleep in her old position by the fire until the coals blackened and collapsed, and woke her, when she moved about the room, coughing and grunting, and muttering complaints against the hardness of her life. The grey daylight began to show through the rifts and cracks of the planks, and a keen draught of air to steal into the room, as though an outer door were open and the cold morning breath had passed into the house to purify it of grosser vapours. Sarah remembered closing her eyes, for an instant as it seemed, overpowered by fatigue, and benumbed by trouble, and then waking, with a start, to find the light brighter and whiter behind the win-

dow-planks, the candle inverted in the brass candlestick, and the room devoid of the presence of her brother's wife. She was alone at last.

## CHAPTER XX.


## THE TERMS OF RELEASE.

THE spiriting away of a young lady from home without her consent, and without leaving a clue wherewith to trace her, is no light feat in the nineteenth century, and Mrs. Thomas Eastbell had shown a natural pride in the neatness of the achievement. True, the house was five or six miles from a quiet city, and was desolate enough at all times, the hour was late, the circumstances were opportune, and how to profit by the riches of old Mrs. Eastbell and her granddaughter had been the study of six months; but still Mrs. Thomas Eastbell had something



to take credit for. It was a bold stroke carried out by desperate men, and it had succeeded where a more timid line of policy would have assuredly failed. What the final result would be, it was difficult to surmise, and Tom's wife was scarcely easy in her mind concerning it, though her ill-health, and a fair share of human rapacity, had left her with but little consideration for others. Sarah was to come to no harm—that the Petersons had promised—and Sarah was rich enough, and had sufficient means at her own disposal, to make the whole of them extremely comfortable. It would be easy to frighten Sarah Eastbell into anything, everybody had thought, until Sarah Eastbell was a prisoner, and her sister-in-law had found her difficult to manage. Time might work wonders, but then time was against them, and what a day or two might bring forth to their discomfiture, there was no guessing at. It was to be a *coup d'état*, and away with the booty in various directions, meeting never again together—a real

shower of gold, instead of neat little parcels of bad money sent with difficulty to friends residing in busy towns and cities, and sold at an alarming discount. It was the boldest bit of business that the Peterson gang had been ever engaged in, and the Petersons had been engaged, under various aliases, in innumerable shady transactions. They had come to "fresh fields and pastures new" by adopting the fair county of Worcester as a sphere for their operations; they had rented a tumble-down old edifice in a wild part of the country, and put on the door the name of Jackson, and gone forth to the world as Jackson, Button-maker; they had even made a few acquaintances in distant villages, and bore a respectable name amongst honest unsuspecting folk, who believed in them and their buttons. No one visited them certainly—it was an out-of-the-way place, to which nobody was invited, and where only button-making was the order of the day. A stray native or two had got as far as the front door, but had never been



asked to step inside—it was all business, and no pleasure, at Jackson's. No one confounded the name of Jackson with Peterson—and it was possibly good policy in the captain adopting his own name when he went with Thomas Eastbell to Sedge Hill. It kept matters clear and distinct, though he had not bargained for Sarah Eastbell's good memory, or imagined that he was known to her by sight. The cleverest of men make their little mistakes, and this shrewd scamp, whose shadow falls on our pages for a while, was not infallible.

It was he who unlocked the door of Sarah's extempore cell at seven in the morning, and stood before her, the avowed agent of her captivity. Mrs. Thomas Eastbell stepped into the room after him, with a few sticks of firewood in her lap, and proceeded to lay and relight the fire, looking from one to another very critically, the representative of her absent husband's interest in the matter, and one who would see fair play on both sides. Sarah Eastbell was

busily engaged when her visitors arrived. She had failed in removing the planks from their stout fastenings, and was now boring holes through the wood with the points of a pair of scissors, that she had found on the mantelpiece, with the evident object of obtaining a view of the country. She stopped as Peterson and her sister-in-law entered, and regarded both of them very steadily and watchfully, holding her scissors like a dagger.

Edward Peterson smiled at the position.

"Come, come, Miss Eastbell, you think too badly of us," he said politely; "there is no one in this pleasant country-house who would hurt a hair of your head."

"I am glad to hear it," answered Sarah.

"I have come to apologise for my friend's rough treatment of last night," he said, reclining languidly against the wall, and crossing his gloved hands, one with a very glossy hat in it, "and to express a hope that you have suffered no inconvenience from your temporary with-

drawal from a home which you are accustomed to adorn. I, for one," he added with a low bow, "should regret very much to hear a single word of complaint."

"This is your work, then," said Sarah bitterly; "it is as I suspected."

"Pardon me," he said obsequiously, "but it is not my work. It would be an act of justice to say your brother's, perhaps. I do not own to any complicity in this proceeding, and I simply come here as his messenger."

Sarah shrugged her shoulders incredulously.

"Tell me what my brother wants?"

"Can you not guess?"

"Money."

"If you will pardon me for correcting you once more, I would say a fair redress for injury which you have done him."

"I!—but go on. Let me understand you, if I can."

"Your grandmother is rich, and will leave you all her money."


"You know that!" cried Sarah.

"And your only brother," he continued—"a man of many admirable qualities—will be left to drag on his life in indigence, and to die in utter abjectness of spirit, without you assist him as fairly and liberally as a fond sister should do."

"If he had waited——"

"Pardon me again, but if he had waited till your marriage with Mr. Reuben Culwick, I am afraid that his chances of independence would have been exceedingly remote. Thomas has not the least confidence in Mr. Culwick's generosity. I hurt your feelings," he added quickly, "but forgive me. I am exerting myself to lay the truth plainly before you, and to trust in your sense of justice afterwards."

"And you begin by kidnapping me!" cried Sarah scornfully. "Do you think I am a child, to be deceived by your false show of respect? Tell me what you want?"



“I do not want anything for myself,” said this unselfish being, with a light and airy flourish of his hat, “I am wholly disinterested in the matter, on the honour of a gentleman. But Thomas, who is in difficulties, wants fifteen thousand pounds.”

Sarah drew a sudden and deep breath, but did not reply. The thin face of the woman stooping over the fire peered round at her, horrible in its eagerness and greed, and the task at which she was employed was ceased at once.

Captain Peterson continued—

“Fifteen thousand pounds only, from that immense fortune which must come to you when old Mrs. Eastbell dies, the simple conditions being that the sum must be paid at once, as your brother is very poor, and there is a balance of sixteen thousand three hundred and twenty-eight pounds lodged at your banker’s, in your name, for the convenience of a current account. It is an extraordinarily large sum to keep at one’s banker’s, in my humble opinion,

and the sooner it is reduced the better. Thomas thinks so too."

"How do you know what money is lodged in my name at the bank?"

"Thomas tells me—that is all."

"You have picked the lock of my desk, and seen the pass-book," said Sarah. "Well, the money is not mine."

"It is lodged in your name. You draw the chèques."

"To save trouble—that is all."

"What is your grandmother's is yours, and you can make use of it without any questions being asked," said Captain Peterson; "you might even say you had lent that sum to Thomas for a while."

"Ah! I have been ready at excuses for him in my time," said Sarah bitterly.

"Thomas sent me here with your cheque-book—he found that in your desk too, he tells me. You have only to draw a draft for the amount, and you are free, Miss Eastbell. I promised a



friend of yours that you should be at Sedge Hill this evening."

"Mr. Culwick."

"No. Miss Holland."

"Is she in this plot against me?" said Sarah.

"Miss Holland will tell you everything to-night," he said, as he drew the cheque-book from his pocket, and pitched it carelessly upon the deal table that was there. "I have left everything for that young lady to explain. It is a story apart from yours, and suits not my style of narrative."

His thin lips closed together for an instant, as if with pain or passion—it was a momentary change of expression, which did not occur again in the presence of his captive.

"Have you anything more to tell me?" asked Sarah.

"I don't know that I have," he replied; "I believe I have faithfully performed the mission with which your brother has done me the hon-

our to entrust me. I have only to assure you that you are in safe hands, and to remind you that had your brother Tom been of a less affectionate nature, or his friends more desperate, you might have been in peril here."

He said this in the same light and easy tone, but there was an under-current of deep meaning, which Sarah Eastbell was quick enough to take to herself. It conveyed a threat in the event of non-compliance. But with the morning had come to her a vast amount of courage, and of strength to resist. Now that she understood the position of affairs, she was less fearful of results.

"This money is held in trust for another," she said; "it belongs neither to me nor to my grandmother."

"If to Mr. Culwick, we—I should say, your brother Thomas objects to the title."

"Let him!" cried Sarah with a sudden outburst of anger.

"Am I to understand, then——"

“That I will not sign one of those cheques. Yes, understand that for your friend. You may kill me,” she cried, “but you shall not touch a penny of Reuben Culwick’s money.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

## CLEARING THE HOUSE.

CAPTAIN PETERSON, merchant service, received the ultimatum of Miss Sarah Eastbell with his customary *sang-froid*. He was a man whom it took a great deal to disturb, or who concealed his annoyance by an enviable semblance of imperturbability. He took his back from the wall, and set his hat carefully on his head.

"After that, I need not trespass further on your time," he said. "I will communicate with Thomas at once."

When his hand was on the door, he added—

“I will leave you to reflect on the matter—reflection will bring more prudence to bear upon the question. I have taken you by surprise.”

“No, I have expected something of the kind,” answered Sarah Eastbell.

“There is no occasion for any haste in the matter,” said Captain Peterson coolly; “take a day, two days, three days, to consider it in all its bearings, and how unjustly you are acting by a brother who has been invariably kind to you. This room is at your service; you are perfectly safe here. Good morning.”

He unlocked the door, and went on to the landing-place beyond, closing and locking the door behind him. On the landing-place he stood with the handle of the key pressed to his teeth, and with a graver expression on his fresh-coloured countenance that he had betrayed to her before whom he had laid the conditions of release. Finally he went down the rickety stairs, which were crumbling to pieces with the

house, halted at the bottom of the next flight, and listened at the right hand door, as though there were another prisoner close at hand. The door was not locked, and he opened it softly, and put his head into the room beyond, withdrawing it in silence, as if contented with what had met his gaze; and proceeding down another flight of stairs, to a room on the ground-floor, where three tall men, in shirt-sleeves, were cowering before a fire. They looked round as he entered, and three more villainous faces, more horribly ugly and atrociously dirty, could not have been discovered in all the back slums of St. Giles's. If these men were Petersons, Captain Edward had taken the good looks of the family to himself. Mrs. Thomas Eastbell had been evidently right in her assertions of the preceding night—Sarah was safer with her than with the gentlemen down-stairs.

Edward Peterson took a rush-bottomed chair from the wall-side, and placed himself between his two brothers—a very different man from him

we have seen up-stairs and at Sedge Hill. It was a fierce, hard, and merciless face now, to match his friends'.

"You've done your parts well, boys," he said in a quick sharp voice, "but there may be more to do."

"How's that?" inquired scoundrel number one; "we've done enough now to get ourselves lagged for ten years."

"I don't like the job," muttered scoundrel number two; "I never did."

The third blackguard leaned over a huge iron ladle, and stirred reflectively at a dull bubbling mass of metal, but did not commit himself to an opinion.

"It's not easy," said Peterson, "but"—and here a blood-curdling oath escaped him—"it must be gone on with at any risk. Failure means Worcester Gaol, success means ten thousand pounds between us all."

He had mentioned fifteen thousand pounds up-stairs, but he and Thomas Eastbell were

keeping an extra five thousand "dark." Edward Peterson did not tell his brothers everything when money was in question.

"What more is to be done?" asked the first scoundrel, who was the worst-tempered and most disputatious member of the gang. At school, and he had been to a school once in Dublin, he was a quarrelsome boy, but dull of learning—very.

"You will know when it's necessary," was the short answer; "at present the young lady is refractory."

"Not frightened?" said the second scoundrel.

"Not at all."

The three ruffians laid their shock heads together, and swore in unison.

"She will give in before the day's out," said Peterson assuringly; "a girl of her age, surrounded by mystery, must give up. It's her money or her life, as in the dear old days of Richard Turpin."

He said this with some degree of enthusiasm,



but his brothers did not rise to it. Two of them looked at him vacantly, and the third went on stirring his metallic broth.

"To think that you fellows are so near a fortune, and yet take it so coolly!" cried Peterson reproachfully; "to think that two thousand pounds apiece—two thousand pounds!—does not warm your sluggish blood a little!"

"Ah," said the third ruffian between his set teeth, "we haven't got it yet."

"It's a risky business," muttered another.

"So is making pewter money," added Peterson, "but we have gone at it for years, haven't we? And what have our trouble and risk, our dies and galvanic batteries, brought us in, after all? Two thousand pence—hardly."

"Will the girl sign the cheque before the day is out? that's the question," asked number one, "for we can't go on like this."

"I have said it's her money or her life, and, by Heaven, I mean it!" he said with another oath; "she will be back to-night at Sedge-Hill,

or she will never return again. Mark that."

He struck his clenched fist on his knee, to give emphasis to his words, and his brothers looked from one to the other again, and moved restlessly in their seats.

"Do you think I have planned it all for nothing?" he continued, "or that I am a man to be played the fool with at the last? Is it my way? Is it Ned Peterson's style? Do you think any woman would prefer to be found in the Severn, to paying away money that she can afford to part with?"

"We don't want to hear anything about the Severn," said the first scoundrel; "you know what's safe better than we do, but we'll have no hand in it. Dennis and I and Mike have talked it over, and won't go further than we've done already—there!"

"You are ready for your share of the money, but not of the risk," observed the captain satirically.

"The money was promised for getting the

girl here. It's done," was the reply, "and a nasty job it was. I thought she was dead when we were coming down the river, by——"

"Poor fellow, you were nervous," said Peterson, still sarcastic, "and you thought of a gallows as well, and of your amiable self dangling from a rope, in a private yard of the county gaol, with the reporters booking your last kicks, and making notes for their sensation articles on your lamentable decease. 'A man who came of a good Irish family, but died chicken-hearted, and unlike an Irishman'—that would have been your epitaph, Barney, and much too good for you."

"Ah! you can talk," said Barney, shrugging his shoulders, "you have been so much wiser than the rest of us, but divil a bit of good have you or we done, though we have stuck to you through thick and thin. But we can't be hanged for you, Ned—at present."

"You fools, have I asked you?" shouted Peterson, springing to his feet; "you've done

the work I've set you to do, and I will pay you for it, and be rid of you. The money's safe, and I'll keep my word—as I always do, and always will. I don't want your help—you are in the way, and must go."

"Go!" echoed the men.

"This house will be unsafe after to-night, and we must vanish before it's spotted. I will be in London to-morrow evening at the old place, with your money. Can you trust me?"

"Yes. But if the girl——"

"I shall be with you," he added meaningly, "and afterwards you'll go your way, and I mine, and a good riddance to the lot of you!"

"But——"

"I have had enough of your company," he cried, as he walked up and down the room with his hands in his pockets; "I will make your fortunes, and have done with you. You sneer at the grandest idea I have ever carried out successfully; you tremble at the consequences, like a parcel of children, and to-morrow night I

leave you to yourselves for ever. And see how you get on without me, that's all," he added less grandiloquently, and far more spitefully.

The brothers did not reply—they had no arguments to urge in defence; they were stolid scamps, who had plodded on persistently and doggedly in crime, and been ruled by a stronger and more audacious mind, until the audacity had talked of murder. Then they were afraid of him, and glad to seize upon a pretext for separation. They believed his word too, for there were a few striking antecedents that assured them he was in the habit of keeping it. It was time to be moving, before Worcester became a difficult place to escape from. Ned was right—the house might be marked at any moment, and the button-makers become objects of distrust, until the London police turned up, and claimed them as acquaintances. They would be glad to leave Ned to himself; they had joined him in a little speculation that was out of their line, and its novelty had rendered them nervous, as Cap-

tain Peterson had seen for himself. It was high time to be gone.

One by one these men drifted away from home, without a thought of Sarah Eastbell's safety, and with an immense amount of consideration for their own. It was not murder that troubled their minds so acutely as complicity with it, detection, and sentence. If Ned would take all the risk, he might murder half Worcester, for what they cared ; but it was out of their line, and they would prefer to return to London as quickly as possible, and wait for the money that had been promised them, or the bad news they half expected instead. Each man went away with a little carpet bag containing the implements of his trade, and left the furniture to the Fates. Each man suggested before he went an idea of his own for scaring Sarah Eastbell out of her wits and her money, but the ruling agent scoffed at his devices, and would have none of them.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon before the

last of the three men passed out of the house, and went away down the narrow lane which led from the high-road.

Captain Peterson stood at the door smoking a cigar. He was in excellent spirits, and he waved his hand to the disputatious Barney, who was the last to leave, by way of friendly salutation at parting.

"They're gone," he muttered, "and they're better gone, whichever way this affair is likely to turn out."

He lingered at the door meditating on the great scheme of his life, and it was not till his cigar was smoked out that he seemed to wake again to action. The sky was overcast then, and he looked up at it and prophesied to himself that it would rain before the morning. He walked round to the opposite side of the house and gazed moodily at the water flowing some twenty paces from him, and at a boat lying on the long grass above the river-bank. One glance at the dark-

ened window in the topmost story where his fortune lay, he thought, and then he returned to the house meditating on the difficulties in his way, and of his genius to surmount them. He had been always considered a clever and a daring fellow—what would they say presently if he should get the money? How they would all look up to him afterwards! What an end there would be to his petty scheming life—what a chance of settling down in the world even, and trying his hand at respectability for a change!

He went into the house, and up-stairs to the first-floor room, wherein we have seen him gaze with interest at an early hour of the morning.

“Bess,” he said in a sharp voice, and at the summons a small thin-faced child, in a hat and cloak, appeared at the door.

“You have come back, then, father.”

“Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

Edward Peterson went down-stairs, followed



by the little girl. At the front door he said—

“You were wise to keep to your room to-day, little woman, for they have been very cross, and Mrs. Eastbell has been worse than ever.”

The child shivered.

“Have you had enough to eat up there?”

“I should think so!” was the half-cunning answer, at which the man laughed heartily.

“That’s right, Bess. Look after yourself in this world, for no one else will as the world goes round. Now listen to me.”

The child looked up at him with a wonderful amount of intelligence in her sunken eyes.

“You must find your way to Worcester to-night, all by yourself. Two miles from here is a railway station—you know it, where the red and green lights shine out like big eyes after dark.”

“Yes—I know.”

“You have run about here a good deal, and know your way well, and you can find the station.”

"Oh! yes," replied the child again.

"You'll be glad to get away. I've been hard with you, and you don't like me much?"

"Not much," was the slow answer, "but——"

"But what?" asked Peterson.

"But the lady—will she shake me when she's cross? Will she beat me when she's angry?"

"She will be very fond of you, and you will call her 'Mother,'" said Peterson very gravely.

"Mother—my mother!"

"You'll see soon," he said; "now take care of that money."

He placed some money in her hands, and she wrapped it up in a corner of a dirty white handkerchief and tucked it down the bosom of her dress, wrapping her cloak round her afterwards with all the carefulness and confidence of a woman.

"All right," she said.

"At the railway station ask for a third-class ticket for Worcester. Can you remember that?"

The little girl nodded quickly.

"When the train comes up to the platform, get in. When they call out 'Worcester,' get out. At Worcester a lady, very pretty, and with hands full of toys, will be waiting for you at the post-office. Ask the way to the post-office like a woman as you are, and when you see the lady under the clock say, 'Pa keeps his word—I'm Bessie.'"

"All right," said the child again, with a rare amount of confidence in her own comprehension of the details, which however he asked her to repeat, listening attentively to the recital.

"You're a clever girl, Bess—you've some of your father's cleverness too," he added conceitedly. "Now go."

As he stooped towards her she cowered down, but to her surprise he put his arms round her lifted her to his face, and kissed her.

"I'm not going to hurt you ever any more, Bess," he said, "I'm not going to see you ever any more."

"Shall I stop with you?" said the child slowly, as he set her down again.

"What, not meet the lady, and the toys, and the new home for you that I've told you of? No, no, Bess; you'll do better without me, she knows—and God knows. There, be off with you. Remember Worcester Station—the post-office—under the clock—and 'Father keeps his word; I'm Bessie.'"

"All right," was the child's answer for the third time. She needed no second bidding to be off—it had not been so happy a home that she should grieve for it or him, and there had been a promise of a glorious change for her, and a bright child-world. She ran off quickly towards the narrow lane, already full of shadow that murky afternoon—there was one glance over her shoulder at him, and then he never saw

her again in all his miserable life. He had prophesied that it should be so, and he was right again, as usual !

## CHAPTER XXII.

## A CHANGE OF PLAN.

EDWARD PETERSON was in no hurry to return to the house which his orders had made desolate. He leaned against the doorpost in a thoughtful mood, with his eyes directed towards the lane down which his child had departed. If he had any good feeling in his disposition, it was for that little link between him and a past estate, wherein he had not been wholly bad. Utterly selfish as he was in most things, yet here in this wild character was a strange sample of unselfishness.

“She would have been in my way,” he said’

as if in excuse for his own weakness; then he added, "And what a life hers would have been with me, too!"

It was dark when he returned to the house, and he closed the shutters and barred the door very carefully before he sat down by the fire to reflect upon his next step. He had been reflecting on it all day, without seeing his way too clearly to the results on which he had set his heart—a large sum of money, and a new life abroad to enjoy it in. By some means that end must be arrived at; he had succeeded in entrapping an heiress, a nervous young woman, from whose fears a gold mine must be wrung. She was obstinate at present, but the night was coming on, and she would think of her own safety very shortly. She would get weak too, as she had refused food all day, and weakness of body would affect her mind and become an ally on his side—and Mrs. Eastbell would help to keep up the excitement of suspense.

He would not go upstairs yet awhile—an-

other hour would be of advantage to him, and he must wait. The bank of Worcester was shut, and there would be no getting money till to-morrow morning—before that time came she would sign the cheque, and remain a prisoner in Jackson's button-factory until time had been allowed for him to cash it. That was the end of the brilliant scheme which he had planned out like an artist. It was daring, and yet delicate—only a master-hand like his could have steered through so many difficulties to success. It was a leaf out of an old romance, or an Adelphi melodrama, only this was life, and he was a superior kind of hero—a man of iron nerve, amazing coolness, and fertility of resource. They thought in Worcester by this time that Sarah Eastbell had eloped with him—that was a rare joke over which he and Tom—that fool Tom!—would laugh presently. He wished that he had brought his violin from Sedge Hill, though—it would have wiled away the time until he had perfected his plan in all its details.



Music always gave him good ideas, and——  
Destruction! What is it?—Who is it?

There was a violent knocking at the door, and Peterson sprang up, with his hand shaking on the back of the chair. Had he trifled with time till time had turned against him, and was this the end of his grand scheming? He reached his hand towards the candle and extinguished the flame as his first resource against an unseen enemy. Then he crept on tiptoe towards the door, where the knocking still continued, and where his coolness came back to him.

He was a man of many abilities—for it was a feeble woman's voice that piped through the keyhole—

“Who's there?”

“Is that you, Sophy?” said the voice without. “Where's Peterson? Where's everybody? Let me in.”

“Tom Eastbell,” ejaculated Peterson. He opened the door, and dragged the applicant for

admittance into the house by the collar of his coat—a man drenched to the skin by heavy rain.

“You muddler!” shouted Peterson; “why couldn’t you stop at Sedge Hill? How dare you come intermeddling? Didn’t you leave it all to me?”

“Here—let go my throat—let a fellow speak. What are you doing in the dark? Where are they all? Is Sarah here? has she signed the cheque?”

Peterson released his hold and locked the front door again. Tom followed him into the room, and sat down shivering by the fire. His companion and adviser relighted the candle, and held it to his face.

“Why did you come?”

“For safety. Oh, Ned, I shall be hanged!” Tom cried. “The old woman is dead, and everybody thinks I have done it. Here’s a blessed go for an innersent man! I never touched her, upon my soul; she died right off, bang, in the

picture-gallery, and it was nothing to do with me. I wouldn't have thought of such a thing."

"Dead? The old woman dead!" said Peterson, surprised again at this avowal.

"Oh!—ugh! yes," he said, shuddering more strongly. "Her eyes opened sudden, Ned, and she was off. I shall never forget it. And then that beast of a woman, Hartley, came in when I screamed, and said I had murdered her. I was talking her over to make a will, when she died—that's all. Oh! let's get back to London as quick as we can."

"Tom," said Peterson with excitement, "you must go back. You must not leave everything to that Culwick. The old woman has died naturally—the doctor will prove that—and you have nothing to fear."

"Oh! haven't I? That's all you know about it!"

"You accursed idiot! don't you see that you are rich?—that Sarah Eastbell was only be-

tween you and a colossal fortune?—and Sarah Eastbell is dead too.”

“Sarah dead too!” screamed Tom Eastbell in his new excitement; “oh! don’t say that. It can’t be.”

“Hush! Keep it quiet; it is an eternal secret between you and me; but she sprang out of the boat suddenly last night, they tell me, and was drowned.”

“Good Lord!” cried Tom Eastbell; “let me think a bit. This is too much for me. I am going mad.”

“In a day or two they will find her in the Severn, and you will be heir-at-law.”

“What’s that?”

“The owner of Sedge Hill, and of all the money.”

“They’ll be sure to say I killed the couple of them.”

“Sarah ran away from home—everybody knows that—and came to harm by accident. There is nothing more natural.”

"Poor Sally! She was a good sort," said Tom; "and she—she's dead, then. Thank goodness it was quite an accident—for nobody meant to kill her."

"No."

"I never even knew what game was up, until it was done—did I?"

"No, you did not."

"Poor Sally—dead too! She and her grandmother gone to heaven together, arm-in-arm. Yes, it's too much, Ned! And all the money mine, too—that will be much, too. I shall go out of my mind."

"Get back to Sedge Hill. Is Reuben Culwick there?"

"He wasn't when I left."

"Get back in haste—at any cost. Say you were distracted, and did not know what you were doing—that you have been in search of Culwick—or a doctor—or the devil. Get back."

"Suppose they take me up for killing my grandmother; that's what I'm afeard of."

"Get back; you are safe. Get back, fool, to all the wealth God sends you!"

Edward Peterson's excitement was greater than Thomas Eastbell's now. He thrust him from the house; he locked the door after him; he tottered back to the room, and to a cupboard where there was brandy, which he drank eagerly; and then he drew his chair very close to the fire, and sat with his hands upon his knees, panting like a man who had been running for his life.

Thomas Eastbell would be rich—immensely rich—if his sister Sarah were removed from all the troubles of this world! Tom Eastbell in his power—at his mercy for many past offences—a weak fool whom he could rule implicitly, and get money quickly by. And yet fifteen thousand pounds at one blow might be as well, if he didn't keep his word with his brothers—he who

had been all his life very proud of saying what he meant, and doing what he said. Fifteen thousand pounds! Well, all depended upon Sarah Eastbell's obstinacy now; and it was time for action. It *was* her money or her life; and if the latter, what excuse should he make to Mrs. Eastbell, so that that dull lonely house should be left to him, and to that deadly purpose to which he had steeled his heart in his cupidity? He would drink more brandy and proceed to business. There should be no more acting, and no more half-measures.

He drank more spirit, as if his courage even now required support by drink; and then, with the light in his hand, he proceeded with a wonderful steadiness of step up the stairs. A strange specimen of a villain this—for he went into his daughter's room first, and said, "Poor Bess—you have gone for good, then," and walked out again, and up the remaining flight, with a very sorrowful countenance. He drew the key from his pocket, unlocked the door,

strode in, and then stopped suddenly—a man struck, as it were, into stone by his amazement.

The room was empty !



## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE RETURN.

REUBEN CULWICK did not reach Sedge Hill till a late hour, when the blinds were down before every window of the great house. He did not dream of death at home whilst he had been abroad in pursuit of the living, and in the deep thought born of his baffled search, he strode up the broad garden path without being struck by the blank aspect of the mansion. He had been following phantoms all day; he had been sent on many fruitless quests; he had searched for himself unavailingly; he had set others to search. He had telegraphed to London

early that day to John Jennings, and to Lucy, instructions to discover for him what had become of the Petersons after their break-up at Potter's Court; he had sketched forth in a few words the misery which had befallen him, and the suspicions which he had. He had forgotten in his anxiety that he had quarrelled with the sister, and was scarcely friends with the brother; but then he was scarcely the cool matter-of-fact Reuben Culwick whom we have ever known. Romance had met him at Sedge Hill, and he had discovered that his second-cousin loved him, and that he was in love with his second-cousin, oddly, suddenly, and passionately, at the very instant that she had vanished, like a spirit, from him.

In the great hall the new hard truth met him, to begin with. Mrs. Eastbell had been dead some hours. She had struggled down-stairs into the library and died there. She had been carried to her own room again, and the shadow of death was over Sedge Hill.

“How did it occur? Tell me everything?” he asked, as he went into the picture-gallery, and Hartley followed him. The story was related, and he listened patiently enough, until Hartley became prolix over details, when he beat his foot impatiently upon the carpet. He heard of his aunt’s death, and of Thomas Eastbell’s flight—of the suspicion which attached to Thomas Eastbell until the doctor’s arrival, and that gentleman’s belief in the natural termination to the life and cares of the old lady—of the inquest that must follow her decease.

“Where was Miss Holland?” he asked, forgetting that his own words had sent one friend from the house until Hartley told him she was gone. She delivered Miss Holland’s message to him also, that Sarah would return that evening she thought, and he looked up, and said quickly—

“She was in this wretched plot, then! I did her no injustice.”

His thoughts were with the living rather

than the dead, and he walked up and down the great picture-gallery in his old restless fashion, planning and scheming for the morrow, and thinking but little of Miss Holland's promise. Suddenly he quitted the gallery, and went up-stairs to Aunt Eastbell's room, at the door of which Hartley sat as if the poor old woman needed protection still.

"Why are you waiting here now?" he asked.

"If you please, sir, Mr. Thomas Eastbell has come back again. He has been looking for you, and for the doctor, he says—and I thought that I would sit here as usual. Oh, sir!"—bursting into tears—"she don't seem dead yet."

"Courage!" he answered. "Where is the man?"

"In his own room—changing his clothes, which are wet."

"We will not disturb him. Have you my aunt's keys?"

"Here they are, sir."

There was a little lamp on the bracket, and he passed into his aunt's bed-chamber, Hartley remaining at her post. It was a solemn moment in his life, which he remembers still. It was his last duty to the dead woman, and to the wishes of yester-night, before the tragedy of life fell on them like a pall.

To the living first, for the dead wait patiently.

He opened the iron-box in which the will had been deposited, and where a glance assured him that it lay undisturbed ; and then he closed and locked the box again, whilst the thought came to him that it might never be of use to Second-cousin Sarah.

"Has that man come back because he thinks so too?" he muttered, "is it possible that this should be the end of my father's money—of yours, poor worn-out heart, that never was made happy by its acquisition?"

He drew the sheet from the waxen face lying in the bed. How like it was to his father's in

its stern rigidity!—what a strange end, and yet how common, to all the ambitions of one's petty life!

“If I have done you wrong, old soul, by my secret envy of your lot, or of your riches, or your place here, I pray forgiveness now,” he murmured.

“Amen,” said a deep voice at his side, and he turned at the solemn response, for which he was unprepared. A thin woman, clad in shabby black, stood in the doorway looking at him.

“Lucy Jennings!” he exclaimed.

“You telegraphed to me this morning,” she said, advancing; “you asked me many questions, and I have come to answer them in person.”

“It was kind of you, Lucy,” he said, holding out his hand to her, “for I am in great trouble. See here, too.”

“I see one lying apart from all trouble,” answered Lucy coldly, touching his hand, and

then withdrawing it, sign of a hollow peace between them—possibly of her unforgiveness for past offence—certainly not of any reconciliation—“and one might rejoice at that, instead of mourning for her loss. Your aunt?”

“Yes.”

“She who came between you and your rights?”

“Yes—if rights they were.”

“We will not speak of them now.”

They went out of the room together. Reuben Culwick locked the door, and gave the key to Hartley, after which Lucy and he descended to the hall, Lucy calm and grave.

“What do you know of the Petersons? What became of them after leaving London?” asked Reuben eagerly. “Have you a clue to their address.”

“I think I have.”

“How did you find it?”

“Amongst my circle of penitents, and of poor mortals struggling out of crime, there are many

links of life to the dark world. I found friends to help me at once."

"I am glad. But tell me——"

"Patience. If Sarah Eastbell has been lured away by these Petersons, the clue to their haunt has been already pointed out."

"Heaven bless you, Lucy—but——"

"Don't bless me," she said tetchily, "I don't want your blessings—I think I am above them."

"Well—well!"

"Probably I bring a blessing to you—it is in there."

She pointed to the door of the drawing-room, and he said eagerly as he strode towards it—

"Sarah!"

"Not she. It is something you lost before your second-cousin, and took as much to heart in losing. It is something that changed you—and from which dated your hardness, and your suspicions of me—first of all. It may be your own flesh and blood, for what I know."



“What do you mean?”

“Reuben, I believe you thought I lost her—and hated me from that day. See if I have brought her back again.”

“It can’t be that——”

He did not finish his speech. He left Lucy Jennings, and went with quick steps into the drawing-room, where on a sofa lay a child asleep, a poorly-clad little girl of five years old, with her hat lying by her side, and a tangled mass of fair wavy curls thrust back from her face.

“Tots!” he cried in his astonishment.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## FORGOTTEN.

YES, it was the little girl whom Reuben Culwick had lost in Hope Street—who had been part of his life, and of his best life. When she had disappeared from his home, something that had kept him strong and happy, and regardless of adversity, passed away from him also, and changed him very much. The simple-minded, whiskey-drinking, blundering brother of the stern woman in the background had been very close to the truth when he said one night that Reuben had loved the little waif, from the sheer necessity of loving something, with the strength of his full heart.

"Tots!" Reuben said again in a lower key, and looking back at Lucy Jennings. "It is she— isn't it?"

"Yes; there is no doubt of it."

"How she has altered!—how she has grown!—how pale she is!" said Reuben, leaning over her and kissing her.

"Don't wake her. The child is tired out."

"There's the little mole on the left cheek, too," said Reuben. "It's dear old Tots. Strange that she should come to me in the midst of so much trouble, and I should find her in this house! Tell me all about her, Lucy."

"I met her in the streets of Worcester, near the post-office. It was raining hard, and she was crying because a lady had not come to fetch her. Her father had sent her to Worcester, she said."

"Did she recognize you?"

"No; two years make a vast difference in things. I had died out of her recollection and her liking, as I have died out of many peoples."

"Will she remember me?"

"It is unlikely—it is impossible."

"She was very young when she went away, poor Tots!" said Reuben, sadly regarding her.

"Yes, I suppose it is impossible."

"She came with me in all confidence. I told her that I would take her to her friends, and she believed me."

"You are very kind, Lucy," said Reuben. "How is it that you do me these good services, and yet dislike me so much?"

"I dislike the pride and anger in you," answered Lucy, "and they have turned me against you."

"I am sorry."

"I have had my great work to think of lately—not of the petty differences of eighteen months ago."

"What, are you writing a book too?"

"A book!—no," cried Lucy, with supreme contempt. "I speak of my work of saving souls amongst the London poor."

"I had forgotten."

"And I have forgotten them in coming to this place," said Lucy. "I have done wrong—Heaven forgive me! I did not think," she added, with more excitement, "that anything you could say or do would affect me for an instant now; but when you telegraphed of danger, I thought I might be of use."

"It was of danger to one you saved two years ago—to one you loved."

"I never loved Sarah Eastbell," was the flat contradiction here; "I never liked her."

"Why not?"

"I don't know; I can't tell," was the hasty reply. "I have never stopped to consider why she did not please me—why in many things she was opposed to me."

"And yet you——"

"Don't say any more. I dislike to talk of these things now," she said. "I have learned to value this world as nothing in the balance against the riches of a world to come."

Yes, she had degenerated, or risen, to fanaticism, thought Reuben, as he watched her eyes blaze with the fire that was in them. She was a woman with a mission—always, in Reuben Culwick's opinion, an objectionable female, if the mission were paraded too frequently before every-day folk. He was sorry, but he was never again going to be angry with her, or to sting her with a careless word. She was to him an incomprehensibility—she would ever remain so; but he understood that her life was a sacrifice to others, and he respected her.

"Lucy," he said, "I don't think there is any forgetting this world whilst we have duties in it. Your duty has brought you to Worcester—the old friend whom I can trust, and who I thought might aid me in an hour of tribulation. We have both said hard things of each other in our day—we never could agree together; but we have both believed, I hope, in each other's honesty and good faith. We clashed fearfully

at last, because you grew more severe upon my faults, and because I had become a disappointed man, to whom extra severity was an affront; but, Lucy, for all past words of mine, for all past actions that have in any way affected you, I hope you will forgive me."

Lucy Jennings tried to look hard at him, to show her firmness, and her calm disregard of these mundane matters; but she failed for once. She was only a woman, and Reuben's words touched her heart, and the past life in Hope Street, sordid and unpoetical as it was, was a memorable episode that only the grave could close over. She would have shed tears some time since, but she was strong enough to resist them now, though they welled to her eyes.

"I am glad you are sorry," she murmured; "you were very hard and cruel, Reuben."

"Ay, I think I must have been," he replied. "I wasn't myself; but you always would have it that I was fretting after my father's fortune, and it was nothing of the sort."

"What was it, then?" asked Lucy, inclined to argue the question afresh.

"My ill-luck with my books, for one thing, my second-cousin Sarah for another. And now tell me what plan you have adopted to discover these Petersons—whether you think that——"

"Tell me first, are you going to marry Sarah Eastbell?" asked Lucy, interrupting him.

"God willing, I am. But Sarah is away; the best and most unselfish woman in the world is set apart from me, Lucy, at the instant that I discover the value of her love."

Lucy was not to be touched again by any fervour in the remarks of Reuben Culwick; on this occasion the sharp face seemed to grow sharper, and the thin lips to close more firmly.

"She asked you to marry her, I suppose?" Lucy Jennings said, almost contemptuously.

"On the contrary, I asked the poor woman, lying so still upstairs now, permission to address her grand-daughter."

"What could you see in Sarah?"



"A rare unselfishness, and a deep affection, I have already said," said Reuben. "Is not that enough?"

"Along with the money—yes."

"If Miss Jennings will take the trouble to consider——" began Reuben, sternly. Then he started to his feet and cried, "No, Lucy, I will not utter a word to wound you again. Say what you will of me, and think the worst of me and my actions, as you may. You are here as my friend, to assist me, and I am silent."

Lucy Jennings rose and stood by his side.

"Still, I cannot understand why a thoughtful, educated man, should care for a child like her," she said.

"Or a child like Tots," he added.

"Yes—add that if you will."

"After my mother's death, Lucy, I had only those two fugitives to look up to me—to believe no wrong of me—and I gave them very readily, and gratefully, all the affection of my heart. It was love for love," he said.

"Only those two! Well, sir," she answered, with strange coldness, "you were lucky to have two to love you, although one was a baby"—pointing to Tots—"and the other a young woman who, in her prosperity, assumed the manner of the patroness."

"You talk in this way of one whom you have come to help!" said Reuben, sadly.

"I was never afraid of the truth."

"No, but you will make others afraid of it, if this is it. But there, I am silent," he said, as she drew herself up rigid and grim at his last taunt; "I will *not* quarrel again with you—I will for ever call you my best friend, if you will show the way to Sarah Eastbell's safety."

"You are too romantic for your years, Reuben," said Lucy in reply; "but I will not trouble you to keep your temper with me. See, the child is waking."

Reuben turned to the little girl, who had struggled into a sitting posture on the sofa, and was looking at them, all eyes—all blue eyes too

—as Tots had looked at him in Hope Street, years ago.

“Tots,” he said, advancing to her, “Tots, old lady—don’t you know me?”

His manner was too impetuous, and his quick strides towards her were so symbolical of punishment for some offence which she in her ignorance had committed, that the child sprang up and ran to Lucy Jennings, burying her face in the skirts of her protector.

“The child is frightened of you,” said Lucy calmly; “let her be a while.”

Reuben was dismayed.

“Why, Tots, it’s Uncle Roo,” he cried, “old Uncle Roo—you know!”

The child still clung to Lucy’s skirts, and would have none of his affection. He gave up, and walked away to the window.

“You see how this kind of love lasts,” said Lucy bitterly; “and yet you value it so highly!”

“Because it set a high value upon me,” he answered quickly.

"It is dead."

"It will live again—it will come back."

"And if not," Lucy answered, "there is your second-cousin to console you."

Reuben could not bear this last taunt—from a woman whose mission was to preach peace on earth and good-will amongst men; it was strangely uncharitable. He swung round with a dark look on his face, and Lucy knew the warning and drew herself up, ready for one more war of words with him.

The opening of the door cut short the clash of arms.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## UTTERLY CONFOUNDED.

IT was Thomas Eastbell who advanced into the room, with a forced and swaggering air, and whom Reuben Culwick and Lucy paused to confront. Tots clung still to the skirts of Lucy Jennings, with her face hidden in the folds.

“Oh! you’re back,” he said to Reuben; “of course you know what’s happened since you’ve been away?”

“Yes,” answered Reuben laconically.

“I’ve been looking for you everywhere—I’ve been running after the doctors—if we had a

plague in the house, I think people would stop in it more than they do," said Tom Eastbell.

"Have you heard anything of Sally?"

"Your sister is expected home presently."

"Eh?"

Mr. Eastbell's lower jaw dropped, but it was a temporary relaxation of the muscles, for he laughed and said—

"I am glad to hear it. Didn't I tell you it was one of her fly-away touches? Didn't I say all along—Who's this?"

"My name is Jennings," said Lucy.

"Oh! you're Jennings. I have heard of you, but I don't know that we have ever met before."

"Probably not."

"May I ask what you want, marm, now you are here?" asked Thomas. "You'll excuse me, but since my grandmother's death and Sally's disappearance—and until Sally returns—I consider I am the head of this establishment."

"I am compelled to answer your questions if this is a true statement," said Lucy.

"Yes, I should think you were. True indeed—that's a good one! Why, you don't know my poor grandmother killed herself thinking about me," he said. "She was worried—she wanted to leave me all her money—and she died of disappointment because she hadn't time to finish her new will."

He addressed Lucy Jennings, but he was watching the effect of this announcement upon Reuben Culwick from the corners of his eyes.

"It is Heaven's mercy that your grandmother died, then," replied Lucy to him.

"What?"

"I have been making inquiries concerning you to-day, and I have heard of nothing to your advantage."

"Who cares what you have heard?" he shouted. "What business was it of yours to make inquiries?"

"You and one Edward Peterson were in this house, from which your sister has disappeared," said Lucy. "Amongst my congregation there

were two or three who remembered the Petersons, and thought they could be traced. We are searching for them now, under the name of Jackson."

Thomas Eastbell put one hand to his shirt-collar; his throat had begun to swell suddenly, and he felt uncomfortable.

"Oh!" he said, "if that's it, you're on a wrong——"

Tots had looked round at the sound of his voice some moments since, but he had not noticed her till then, and then his voice utterly deserted him, and his eyes protruded in his amazement. He did not ask any further questions of Miss Jennings. The child belonged to Edward Peterson. He and his wife had had the charge of her once, and grown tired of her, and lost her in a Camberwell back street, where Reuben had found her; and Edward Peterson had discovered her a year or two afterwards, and taken her from the Jenningses; but he could not stop to explain that now. A few



days ago that child was at Jackson's button-factory, and she must have come to Sedge Hill with the news. He was caught in a trap again. He knew it had not been safe to return, but that fool Peterson had persuaded him. They knew all, and were getting him into a line by degrees; everything might have been discovered, for what he knew to the contrary. He must "cut it," at any risk. He would come back again if all were safe, but he could see Worcester Prison very plainly in the distance now. He backed to the door, prepared for a rush in his direction from that brute of a fellow with the beard: But no one moved—no one uttered a word to bid him stay and confess his rascality. It was remarkable; but perhaps the police were round the house by this time, and they felt that they were sure of him. What had happened, he wondered, to bring Peterson's daughter to Sedge Hill? Had she blown upon them?—a child of that age! The Lord forgive the depravity of a baby like that!

He went into the passage and closed the door behind him. He took down a hat from the tree in the hall and put it on. It was Reuben's hat, and went over his eyes, and was altogether a bad fit; but the sooner he was off the better, and where he had put his own hat he could not recollect in the present confusion of his faculties. All that concerned him materially was his own personal safety. If Sally was dead the child might have brought the news—might have seen him at the factory two hours ago—and he might be hanged before he knew where he was. It was a dreadful business altogether; why had he ever embarked in it? Why had he not trusted to his grandmother's generosity and Sally's kindness, and come in a quiet way to Sedge Hill? Why had he let that Edward Peterson talk him over all his life?

He went on tiptoe to the front-door and drew back the heavy bolts and the big lock. He opened the door and let in the wind and rain—and Sarah Eastbell!

Yes, it was his sister, with a shawl over her hair, and her face, white and wild, peering from it. She had come back—she knew all—he was done for!

“Tom, you villain!” she shrieked forth, at first sight of him.

Thomas Eastbell went down on his knees at the same moment as Reuben came from the drawing-room.

“Oh! Reuben! take care of me,” Sarah murmured, as she went fearlessly to the friendly shelter of his arms; “I have no one else.”

“She never could take care of herself,” muttered the inflexible Lucy, as she followed Reuben Culwick into the hall.

It was as Mary Holland had said, and Sarah Eastbell was back in her own house.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE BAD NEWS.

THE great conspiracy was at an end, and Sarah Eastbell had baffled the conspirators. All that had been planned by Captain Peterson, and which Sarah's absence from Sedge Hill had rendered nugatory, all the new scheming to which that absence had given rise, and which was set in action with Sarah's return, had collapsed at the eleventh hour. Sarah was neither dead nor a captive, and Tom Eastbell was as far removed from prosperity as he had ever been.

He had believed that Peterson had told the truth, and Sarah's death had left him heir to

the estates, until his sister faced him in the hall; where he thought at first that it was her spirit, pale, revengeful, and terrible. To know that she was alive and well, was only to cast fresh tribulation on him; for life meant discovery of the plot, and punishment to those who had acted treacherously towards her.

The Petersons might be already in prison, and he had walked into his own trap when the chances had been open for his escape. It was like his luck. He had never known what was best for himself, with all his cleverness!

“I—I never meant——” he began; then he burst forth with—“Oh! I am so glad you’ve come back, Sally—so glad that you ain’t dead!”

The door remained open to the night, where the rain fell still, a heavy down-pour, with but faint hope of cessation till the morning.

“Were you waiting for the news of my death, then?” asked Sarah with indignation.

“I—I did not think that. Oh! no—but——”

Sarah Eastbell would hear no more. She was mistress of the position, and stronger than he now.

"There is your world, Tom," she said, pointing to the door, "beyond this house, and any love of mine, from this day. You could not trust me—you set a snare for me, and called in rogues and villains to assist—you begrudged me my prosperity and my life. Now go!"

"But——"

"I will not hear you!" she cried impatiently; "thank Heaven I am merciful enough to let you go away."

"What have I done?" he said, as he rose from his knees; "who can prove anything against me? If the Peter——"

Lucy Jennings' hard voice cut short his defence, and he backed from the woman to the open grounds beyond the house with every word she hurled at him.

"Tom Eastbell, some hours ago, in London, I gave information to the police where the

Peterson gang were likely to be found—where you were, and in what way you were connected with them. You have not any time to lose.”

He lost no time accordingly. In the darkness and the rain Thomas Eastbell disappeared at once, conscious that the game was over, and he was trumped out of play. If Sarah could forgive him all past trespasses—and that seemed doubtful—there were other matters, foreign to her and to the thread of this eventful history, which necessitated his immediate retreat. He vanished away, a thief to the last—for he departed with Reuben Culwick’s best hat rammed over his eye-brows. Sarah turned again to Reuben, her watchful protector, who would keep her for ever in his sight now, and as the door closed she linked her hands upon his arm.

“Take me in, please—I am tired out, Reuben. I have fought hard to get home!”

He led her very tenderly and carefully to the

drawing-room, where the presence of Tots came as a new surprise to her.

"You here!—is it you?" she said wonderingly, as she sat down in the big arm-chair which her grandmother had occupied for the last time on the preceding night.

"Do you remember her, then—when you lay ill at John's house?" asked Lucy. "I thought I kept the child away from you."

"I saw this child some hours ago," said Sarah; "it was she who brought a duplicate key of the room in which the Petersons had confined me. I bribed a woman—who was with me," she added after a pause—"ah! forgive me, Reuben, it was with your money too!—to let the child unlock it and set me free."

"Now God bless Tots!" cried Reuben; "she brings a blessing back at her first step towards us."

"She brings your second-cousin back," said Lucy Jennings calmly, and by way of a correction.



"Tell me how it happened—how it was that you disappeared from all of us," said Reuben, impatiently.

He did not regard Lucy Jennings—he drew his chair to his cousin's side, took her hand in his, and gazed eagerly into her face. She might fade away again from his life, if he did not make sure of her.

"Yes, yes," said Sarah, in answer to his questions; "but grandmother—tell me first, is she not very anxious about me?"

Reuben paused for a moment in dismay. There were stern facts on both sides, and the death of the poor old woman was one of them. He looked towards Lucy Jennings, not for help in this crisis which there was no evading, but to arrest her blunt announcement of the truth which he feared would at once escape her. But Lucy Jennings, though fond of plain-speaking, was woman enough to perceive the danger of a sudden statement of all that had happened at Sedge Hill since Sarah had been away.

"Your grandmother is not anxious, Sarah," said Lucy in a low tone.

"Is she ill?"

"No. She is not ill now."

"Is she—ah! you are keeping something back! Tell me, please," she said, in great excitement, "where she is. She is not dead—oh! she has not died without a word to me?"

"She is in God's hands—and God keep you strong to bear the loss of her," said Lucy Jennings, solemnly.

Sarah Eastbell closed her eyes, and sank back in the chair like a dead woman. Reuben, a man wholly uncharitable—as men will be in stages of excitement which strike home to them, and rob them of their self-possession—turned upon the poor preacher, who, in this instance, had done her best at least.

"There, you have killed her! Are you satisfied now?" he shouted at Lucy Jennings.

"I am not satisfied with this world, or with you," was the cold answer, as she bent over Sarah, and loosened the fastenings at her throat. But Sarah Eastbell had not fainted—she was only stunned by the truth; and she sat up the instant afterwards, eager for the whole story, and looking piteously from one to another.

It was not in Reuben's power to break the news to her after all, and he left it to the woman whom his impatience had wounded.

"Tell her, Lucy. It is beyond me," he said.

The tragedy of Sedge Hill was over, and he could not dwell upon its details, with Sarah Eastbell for a listener. In the early moments of a great loss, he knew too well how vainly consolation seeks to find its way to the afflicted. He had lost a mother under hard circumstances of life; and his father had died in enmity, and he had not done his best to become friends with him at last; Lucy Jennings had told him that,

as well as his own heart, which had been too proud to speak out. He had been in the wrong—he had given way like other men, when trusting too much to his own strength; and he felt suddenly very weak and child-like, sorry for the past and for the present, but looking hopefully forward to a future beyond the natural griefs of that night.



# BOOK III

MANY CHANGES.



## CHAPTER I.

## THE UNLUCKY HOUSE.

**T**IME brought resignation to the heart of Second-cousin Sarah. A few weeks after the death of old Mrs. Eastbell, it was possible to believe in content, and look forward to happiness. After the storms of the latter days, had come peace to Sedge Hill, and more than one talked sanguinely of life's troubles lying back from their path. The hill was not steep, on the rest of the journey lay no pitfalls, doubts, or misconceptions; only a few steps away, counted by the beats of full hearts, was surely the brightness and clearness of a day in which no sorrows could live!



Reuben Culwick was still at Sedge Hill, visitor and sentinel, and Lucy Jennings had not returned to her flock in the dark London streets. Reuben wrote his articles in Worcestershire, and Lucy's work for a while, and against her will, was left to earnest, red-hot deputies. Sarah had given up on the night of her return, and after the news of her grandmother's death; she did not fall ill, but she gave way, and grew grave, despondent, and nervous, until the inquest was over, and "Died by the visitation of God" was duly recorded by twelve wise men. Thomas Eastbell was no witness at the inquest; he had passed away from Sedge Hill, and though the inquest was once adjourned for his appearance, he did not condescend to return and give his evidence. Hartley, who had entered the picture-gallery at the moment of Mrs. Eastbell's death, and the doctor offered sufficient testimony as to the natural decease of the old lady; and it was generally known in Worcestershire that there

were valid reasons for Tom Eastbell's absence, without attributing to that gentleman the deliberate murder of his grandmother. It was possible that Sarah in her heart had feared the verdict of a coroner's jury, had even suspected the worst, judging by the act of which she had been nearly the victim, and the antecedents of her brother's life. From the trials by which she had been surrounded, she had hardly emerged—and this old woman had loved her very much, both in her poor and rich estate.

Still time brought its natural relief, and its fairer colouring to life. Grief cannot lie long at the heart of the young, and Reuben Culwick was at Sedge Hill a different man from him whom she had seen in London lately.

It was the Reuben of old Hope Street days—not the ascetic who had shut himself from his kin and offended Lucy Jennings—it was Reuben Culwick who thought of others and had belief in others again. His misanthropy had been engendered by many accidents, which he

now condescended to explain, and at which explanation Sarah clasped her hands, and Lucy Jennings elevated her eyebrows.

His father's death had brought him remorse for his share of disaffection, and Reuben had set himself in a worse light than he deserved; then there had followed the misery of debt, and the greater misery of what he had considered neglect, until Sarah Eastbell had stolen like a vision to his cell, and brought him back faith in human kind. It was not the loss of his father's money—for he had always been prepared for it, he said—though he had tried hard once to place himself in the worst light, and to set his second-cousin Sarah against him by calling himself a money-loving prig! When Sarah had not believed in his self-disparagement, the man's heart had softened more rapidly than he had bargained for. There was more truth and less ingratitude in the world, and his second-cousin had saved him. Nay, more, his second-cousin had loved him, and all the past

sank back like an ugly dream after that discovery, and the future became full of golden promise. This was the end, he thought. He should marry Sarah Eastbell, and live happily ever afterwards. Happy and rich! It was the riches that furrowed his brow, though, occasionally; the shadow of the money fell across the path of his rejoicing—the eternal shadow of his father's money!

If he could only prove that he had never cared for it, if Sarah would not believe that she added to his happiness by bringing with her the wealth of which his father had deprived him, if the unselfish thought of transferring to him his inheritance did not add to her happiness so much, he should have been glad—man being a selfish and proud animal, that is never at rest until the smirk undertaker measures him for his last freehold.

Sarah Eastbell would discourse too much upon her own unworthiness when she grew stronger, and would dwell too eloquently upon

the riches which she would bring him on her marriage-day. They were engaged to be married then ; they were betrothed, and had no secrets from each other ; they could talk of their future together in all that blessing of perfect confidence which comes once to most men, and lifts them for a while—ah ! God help them, for what a little while !—above the selfishness of daily life.

Even the present condition of things could not last, and before Sarah Eastbell had given much consideration to it, Lucy Jennings, severe moralist, had called attention to the position. Reuben Culwick was in the garden then with Tots, and Lucy and Sarah were at the window, glancing towards them occasionally. Reuben had won all the child's love back, without winning back one reminiscence of Hope Street. The child had faith in him, and had found a strange tenderness and kindness rising suddenly in a path of much privation, and she had turned to Reuben with the instinct of old days.

"This cannot last, Sarah," Miss Jennings said, so suddenly that her listener jumped again.

"What cannot last, Lucy?"

"This kind of life. When is he going away?"

"Who?—Reuben?" asked Sarah Eastbell, turning pale at the inquiry.

"Yes."

"Going away from here, you mean?" added Sarah, as if hardly able to understand the suggestion in its entirety.

"You keep him from his work—and you are strong enough to let him return to it."

"I thought he might remain here, master of the house—that there was no occasion for him to go away ever again," said Sarah, half thoughtfully, half sadly.

"Do you mean, to remain with you till your marriage?" asked Lucy sharply—"you two alone together?"

"Oh! no—the world would not call that fit and proper, Lucy, any more than you would,"

replied Sarah, "but I thought he might take his place at once in his father's house, whilst I went away with you."

"With me?" repeated Lucy.

"Till he came to fetch me for good—a year hence, say, when the grief has gone further back."

"Have you suggested that?"

"No."

"Don't, or you'll begin to quarrel," was the reply. "His is a pride which you do not understand, any more than you understand him."

"Not understand my Reuben?"

"*Your* Reuben does not understand himself," said Lucy tartly; "he is lacking in stability—there is no religion in him—he gives way under trouble like a child."

"You are thinking of the past—which he has explained."

"As well as he can," said Lucy moodily; "do you make out his explanation?"

"Yes," answered Sarah, blushing, "I fancy I do."

Had he not said that the thought of her ingratitude had cast him wholly down, at a time when he was in adversity, and his father's death was on his conscience—and in these golden days was she not ready to believe him?

"I don't want to hear it," said Lucy, with a little jerk of her head; "and I shouldn't believe it, I daresay, whatever it is."

"Ah! Lucy, if I didn't know what a good woman you are, how your hard words would pain me!"

"I am only striving to be good—I am a miserable sinner, Sarah," announced Lucy, softened somewhat by her companion's words, and suffering two fair arms to steal round her neck; "the world is full of miserable sinners, too, and my mission is amongst them. I have neglected their interests, and turned my back upon them—there are those in my place who may misguide and misinstruct them—who have not my



tact," she added, with that naïve conceit in her own powers which was her characteristic bit of pride. "I have been too long here. I am going away to-morrow."

"To-morrow! Oh, Lucy!"

"On Sunday next I shall preach God's word again," she said with glistening eyes; "I shall be happier in doing my duty than in neglecting it thus sinfully. I shall have forgotten you and him."

"Why should you wish to forget us?" asked Sarah, wonderingly.

"Because you trouble my mind in spite of me," she answered, releasing herself from Sarah Eastbell's half-embrace; "because my mission is apart from you both—and yet you follow me like this," she added angrily, "you call me back to my weak world, and my bad self, and I shall be very glad to escape."

"I had hoped you would have been happy here, Lucy."

"A fine house brings no happiness to me."

"And as for going away to-morrow," continued Sarah, "why, your going away means *his*."

"Ah! that's what you are thinking about," said Lucy bitterly; "well, it's natural. You love him very much?"

"With all my heart," answered Sarah; "Heaven knows how long I have loved him, Lucy."

"Don't call Heaven to witness your girlish nonsense, child. I wish that you understood his nature better," said Lucy, "for you are making an idol out of common clay."

"Reuben is not common clay!" cried Sarah warmly.

"You are too young for him. You haven't considered—but there, there! what is the use of this? I am going away to-morrow, and he will leave Sedge Hill too."

"And what is to become of me?" asked Sarah Eastbell plaintively; "have you thought of that?"

"No," was the reply.

"Then you don't care for me much," said Sarah reproachfully.

Any other woman save the strange eccentricity by her side would have uttered some common-place expressions of regard under this accusation. But Lucy Jennings preferred hurling hard truths, however sharp those missiles were, at her acquaintances.

"I thought once that I might like you in time," said Lucy Jennings, very slowly and clearly, "when you were a poor outcast of a girl, and I led you to my home in Hope Street. I thought you would trust in me, and look up to me ; but you did not, and with your advance to affluence my interest died away. I suppose that was the reason," she added more doubtfully ; "I can't tell exactly, but——"

"But you didn't care for me?" added Sarah.

"Yes—that's it."

"I used to think no one ever cared for me but my poor grandmother, and so I grew

up sullen and strange," said Sarah, "until Reuben taught me what was right."

"We need not begin about that man again," said Lucy shortly.

"But he is going away—he will surely go away to-morrow, if you do."

"Yes, he will see the necessity of that," was the reply. "It is right."

"And you will not think of me?" said Sarah reproachfully once more.

"What is there to think of?" cried Lucy, still more energetically; "I leave you very happy, with the wish of your life gratified in Reuben Culwick's affection, with wealth around you, and with the promise of brighter days than even these to come—with everything to make the heart light, and its owner grateful; and yet you ask what is to become of you, as though you were an object of pity and contempt, like me."

Sarah was astonished at this outburst of reproof. She was weak still, and she shrank

further away from Lucy Jennings in her new amazement.

"Pity—contempt!" ejaculated Sarah Eastbell, in a low aside.

"I have been pitied—there are many who despise me—mine has been a thankless life," Lucy said, with sudden coldness, "and it contrasts strangely with your own, at which you murmur. Don't speak of it again."

"I do not murmur at my life," said Sarah, in self-extenuation, "and you are mistaken, Lucy, in thinking me ungrateful. I thank my God for being rich——"

"For being rich!" exclaimed Lucy.

"Rich enough to make him rich, and set him in his rightful place."

"Him again!" muttered Lucy.

"But you leave me utterly alone, when you and Reuben go away—alone in this great mansion, which I hold in trust for its master, and cannot desert—where my poor grandmother died—where danger came to me, and will come

again," she added with a shudder, "for it is an unlucky house!"

"You are nervous still," said Lucy; "you will overcome this feeling in a day or two."

"Never."

"Then you are foolish," said her companion.

They were her last words, and the woman, without pity for Sarah Eastbell's life—possibly with some envy of it—went from the room leaving Sarah to reflect upon all that had been said. Yes, very foolish in her new life, and with her new love—after all, Lucy Jennings was right, perhaps—for Reuben, returning with Tots to the drawing-room, found his second-cousin in tears.

"Why, Sarah—what is this?" he cried, leaning over her, and endeavouring to console her by fair words and fond caresses. Tots was faintly jealous of these, and walked pensively out of the room. Hers was an odd little world too, which she could not understand—she had gone back strangely of late days—but there was

much love in her new sphere, only she did not seem to have it all to herself.

"I thought we were getting over this," said Reuben cheerfully, as he sat by Sarah's side.

"Ye—es," sobbed Sarah, "but Lucy has been talking of your going away to-morrow."

"That's exceedingly kind of her, to make all my little arrangements in this way," said Reuben drily.

"She has not done that," Sarah hastened to explain, "only she has determined to return to London herself, and you—you must not stop here without her, you know."

"Without the duenna to play propriety—no, it's hardly the etiquette by which our sober lives should be governed," answered Reuben. "Yes, I must go."

"Ah! that's what I say," replied Sarah.

"But I shall come back again—in a day or two—with a marriage licence, Sarah. There!" he added.

"Oh! no, no—that can't be yet," cried Sarah,

trembling and reddening, and then turning pale.

"How is it possible?"

"Is it impossible Sarah?" he asked, tenderly and earnestly. "Under the strange circumstances, is it not what the old lady would have wished herself? Shall we respect her memory the less, because we end a false position between us?"

"It can't be," whispered Sarah to herself again.

"I have been thinking of this, and yet not liking to speak of it, Sarah," continued Reuben. "Conventionality has shaken me by the throat, and told me to be respectable and miserable for twelve months; and I have shaken up conventionality in return, and told it, to its prim face, that it was an awful humbug. Miss Jennings is right—I can't stop here after she is gone—but I can't go away to my garret, and leave you here, a temptation to all the villains who know how rich you are, and what hinges



on your life. Second-cousin Sarah, we must marry in self-defence."

She could not answer yet. She was bewildered—there was a strange mixture of grief and joy at her full heart—she would have been glad to cry again, only Lucy Jennings had told her that she was childish.

"See what a false position you keep your future lord and master in for twelve long months," he said lightly—"a poor and unsuccessful author, writing out his heart's blood in a top-garret of Drury Lane—another Chatterton, only the world will never rave about him!—a starveling, too proud to take money from you, until he takes your hand as well. You know how fond of money he is—how unhappy he has been always in his poverty!"

Sarah did not perceive the keenness of the jest—she remembered Lucy Jennings' words, and felt the force of the argument, that was all. He had treated his life without her very lightly, but it was a terrible picture for all that,

which he drew, and she thought how true it was.

He did not dwell on this, however; he was eloquent in depicting life with her at Sedge Hill in his father's house—he was full of clear reasoning as to the practicability and advisability of the step—he spoke of his love for her, and his anxiety for her.

“Let me ask Lucy,” she implored at last; “don't press me now to give an answer.”

“It cannot matter much what Lucy says,” he replied; “but ask her, Sarah—and think of this, and of me, till to-morrow.”

He was sure of her consent, and he let her leave him without pressing too persistently for her reply. It was the natural end of the position—it was just and fair, he thought—it saved them from much unhappiness.

Sarah went away in search of Lucy Jennings, whom she found in the room which had been allotted to her—in Miss Holland's room that used to be.

And here began a new trouble for Second-cousin Sarah at once. It came to her, sharp and sudden, like a blow. She was right in her judgment of Sedge Hill. It was not a lucky house !

## CHAPTER II.

## NO PEACE.

LUCY JENNINGS was writing busily in her room when Sarah came in softly with the news. The woman-preacher had gone to her own apartment, away from the society of two young folks who thought of little save each other, and whose courtship did not interest her.

She was surrounded by papers, and she had set her desk close to the window for the advantage of the light, Lucy's eyes not being so strong as they used to be. She was wearing spectacles when Sarah entered—thick, ugly,

black-rimmed spectacles—which she whipped off and dropped into a side-pocket with a strange alacrity, as the door opened, considering how far above the little vanities of this earth she had set her great ambition. She had hoped for a quiet hour in this room, but it was not to be. She had letters to write to one or two of the principal members of her flock, announcing her return; she had half a hundred instructions to set forth; she had a grave matter to consider affecting the people whom she was about to leave at Sedge Hill even, and now here was this tiresome, one-idea'd Sarah Eastbell again. She was never glad to see her; it was very true that she did not like Reuben's cousin—nay, that she tried very hard at times not to like her.

“Oh! Lucy, what do you think he has been saying?” Sarah cried in her excitement, as she came into the room and steered her way, amongst Miss Holland's unclaimed boxes, to the window.

"Who has been saying?" asked Lucy, without looking in her direction.

"Reuben, to be sure."

"Always Reuben!—I had forgotten there was no other man upon the earth but Reuben Culwick," she said bitterly.

Sarah took a seat close to the side of Lucy Jennings, with a want of ceremony which startled the elder lady.

"He says I must ask your opinion if I will—and you will think how right he is."

"It will be about the first time in my life that I have thought him in the right," she muttered; then she added, in her sharpest and jerkiest manner, "well, what is it?"

"I have been telling him of your going away to-morrow—of the necessity of his going too, as you suggested, and he says—oh! Lucy, what do you think he says?" she cried, clapping her hands together.

"I can't guess. What is the object of guess-

ing, when it is easy for you to explain?" was the ungracious rejoinder.

Sarah Eastbell did not notice the chilliness of Miss Jennings' remarks. She dashed into her subject forthwith; she spoke of Reuben's wish for an early marriage, as a wise and natural solution to the difficulties in their way; she repeated all Reuben's arguments as to the reason for pursuing this course; she confessed artlessly enough her own affection, her own wishes, and embarrassments; and Lucy Jennings heard her out patiently.

"In all his life he has been in a hurry," Lucy said, when Sarah had completed her recital, "so what is the use of my advice? It would be an ill-timed formality, of no value to either of you."

"I have come for your advice, Lucy—I don't know what to do."

"If he had been less impetuous," said Lucy, betraying a sudden excitement herself, "it would have been as well—it would have given

me time to think. Sarah, you must not marry Reuben Culwick yet."

"You—you think it is not right; it is not respectful to the memory of her I have lost?" asked Sarah.

"Respectful!" cried Lucy contemptuously; "I have not given a thought to it! But——" and here followed a long pause, with Lucy glaring strangely at her visitor—"but," she continued at last, "something has happened in this room, that I have been keeping to myself, and which may alter both your lives."

"Something has happened?" repeated Sarah slowly.

"Yes."

"I have been waiting for it; it was not possible for any happiness to come to me," said Sarah mournfully. "Tell me what you fear."

"I don't know—I can't say," answered Lucy, "I have not had time to think. I have been trying to set it apart from my thoughts, until I could have spoken to Reuben about it quietly



to-morrow ; but you come in upon me, and disturb me with fresh revelations, and there is never peace !”

She held her arms up as if protesting to Heaven against her trials, and Sarah watched her with a nervous interest.

“What has happened which may alter Reuben’s life and mine ?” she asked again ; “and why in this room, where——”

“Where a woman named Mary Holland lived for some years,” said Lucy quickly—“a woman whom you learned to distrust at last ?”

“We did, and yet——”

Lucy Jennings interrupted her again.

“You did not distrust her in vain, perhaps,” she added. “I will tell you, Sarah Eastbell, what I thought of telling Reuben Culwick ; but it may be your right to hear this first of all, as it may affect you most of all—who knows ?”

“Go on,” said Sarah impatiently ; “let me hear the worst.”

“It is not in my power,” was the answer ;

“you must learn it for yourself. Read what is written on that paper.”

Lucy Jennings had opened her desk and produced a long blue envelope, on which were written words in a large clear hand, to which she pointed with her finger—the finger of fate to the timid girl who followed every movement, and leaned forward to the paper cautiously and eagerly.

“Great Heaven!” she ejaculated.

Yes, Lucy Jennings was right; that which might affect the whole after-life of Reuben Culwick and herself was in the hands of the woman-preacher. On the envelope were written these words:—

*“Herein is contained the last Will and Testament of Simon Culwick, of Sedge Hill, Worcester.”*

There was a date appended—the date of the day on which Simon Culwick had called at Hope Street, Camberwell, for the first time, and last, in his life. It was a will made before he

had come that day in search of his son, and it over-ruled all other testaments to which in his life of change he had set his trembling hand.

## CHAPTER III.

## FACING THE TRUTH.

SARAH EASTBELL turned the sealed packet round in a helpless fashion, regarding Lucy piteously meanwhile. Here was a new calamity to change the current of her life ; nothing written therein could bring peace to her, she thought already. It was a will that struck her from this home and set her in her rightful place, a poor dependent or a struggling woman ; it set aside the other will, or Simon Culwick would not have signed it at the eleventh hour. That it left her poor, she did not mind ; but that it made Reuben rich—as she believed it did—seemed to take him from her sphere for ever.

Why it should do this—why she felt already that she had lost him—was singular enough ; but then Second-cousin Sarah was very proud, and very strange at times.

“Where did you find this?” she asked at last.

“In that box,” Lucy replied, pointing to an old-fashioned hair-trunk, studded with brass nails—one of the boxes which Mary Holland had never claimed.

“Was it not locked?”

“The lock had not caught the hasp, I found, and last night I uncorded the box, thinking to refasten it, and render it more secure.”

“Yes—and then?”

“And then I opened the box—I looked in for a moment, and this was the first thing that caught my attention,” said Lucy Jennings. “Is there anything to blame me for?” she added sharply; “in seeing to the safety of Miss Holland’s property, have I not unmasked a spy?”

"I don't know," answered Sarah.

"What right had that woman with Reuben's father's will?" asked Lucy—"has she not committed a crime against the law?—is not this an act of revenge against him?"

"I don't see all this yet," responded Sarah Eastbell, still thoughtfully.

"This will is sealed; it was given in trust to Mary Holland before Simon left for London. It leaves his property to Reuben, and she would have kept him from it. I see it all. I despise that woman, although I have never met her in my life."

"Mary Holland is not here to answer for herself," said Sarah, "and Mary would have preferred Reuben's being rich to my poor grandmother's coming to this house."

"She brought your grandmother here herself; there was a plot in it. Read the will."

"What right have I to read it?" asked Sarah.

"You are in possession. Reuben is too weak

to bear the shock. There may be something in it which he is not to know first of all," she added, with a sudden doubt—"which is to be broken to him by degrees."

"Reuben is as brave as a lion."

"Oh, you don't know him," said Miss Jennings pityingly.

"I don't think so meanly of him as you do," cried Sarah, with sudden spirit; "I don't believe he has fretted for an instant about his father's money, though he told me so once. He has denied it since; he is above all mercenary thoughts."

"You will be his wife; you have a right to set him upon a pedestal and call him hero," was the reply. "I do not blame you for it. It is a woman's duty when she gives up her heart. You love him, that's enough."

"Love him—yes!"

"If you love him, read that will first, and prepare a weak man for all it contains. It is probably riches, but it may be a complete

disinheritance, and which will be the greater shock to such a mind as Reuben Culwick's, I cannot say," Lucy added bitterly.

"Come and see how he will take the news," cried Sarah, defiantly now.

"I have no interest in this; it concerns me not," said Lucy very sharply; "I should not have mentioned it till I was prepared to leave the house, had you not come in with your foolish story of a hasty wedding. Go to him, Sarah. I am busy with a holier task than yours."

She turned her back upon her companion, and bent herself closely over her desk; and when Sarah spoke to her again, she maintained a rigid silence.

It was as well, perhaps, to go alone to Reuben. Sarah had greater faith in him than Lucy Jennings had. She had also a greater power to console him, if this were a new trouble; and if it made him very rich, she had to lay her love down at his feet, and say she was unworthy



of him. What he would answer in return she did not know; and yet at times she thought she did, knowing Reuben Culwick best of all of them, and being closer to his heart than they could ever be.

She went downstairs to the dining-room, where Reuben was not now. She proceeded to the great picture-gallery, where she found him, hand in hand with the child he loved so much, telling into her rapt ears the stories which the canvas breathed in glowing colours to them. He left Tots the moment Sarah came into the room, and advanced eagerly towards her. She was glad of that, for she was jealous of his love for Tots, although she loved Tots because Reuben liked her, rather than because the child had delivered her from bondage.

“Well, what does the great preacher say?” Reuben asked lightly. “Does not Lucy think——”

Then he stopped, quick enough to read the new expression on Sarah Eastbell’s face.

“What has happened?” he asked, in a different tone. “What paper is that?”

“It was found in Mary Holland’s box,” Sarah said timidly, “and it belongs to you.”

Reuben took the packet from Sarah’s hand, and read the superscription, his eyes dilating with surprise. He made no attempt to break the seal of black wax, but walked with her slowly towards the bay window at the end of the room, as though his sight were weak, and more light were needed to assist it.

She seemed to hesitate in her progress with him, and he put his arm round her waist, as a privileged lover, under these circumstances, had a right to do.

“For better or worse, for richer or poorer, my First-cousin-once-removed Sarah,” said he lightly, but meaningly. “Now tell me where this sprang from.”

Sarah told him, whilst he listened, with the paper in his hand, and looked out at the garden and the rising ground beyond it.

Tots stole silently away during the narration.

"Mary Holland may have received—possibly did receive—private instructions from my poor father with this will," said Reuben, when Sarah had completed her narrative. "She is not to blame, I trust, even if it comes at us in this fashion. It was to be kept back, at Simon Culwick's request, a certain time, possibly, he being a secretive man."

"Has that time arrived?"

"Miss Holland is not here to tell us," answered Reuben, "and you and I stand in a false position, with this will lying like a bar upon the freedom of our thoughts. I take all the responsibility; it is my right, as Simon Culwick's son."

"You are not afraid of the contents?" she asked, remembering suddenly Lucy's criticism of Reuben's temperament.

"There is nothing within the will to frighten me," he replied firmly, "or to make me glad, or cast me down. See how steady the hand is

that turns over the page of this new book of fate."

His fingers broke the seal and took from the envelope the document contained therein. As he opened it very coolly, he looked steadily at Sarah.

"My second-cousin, whom this affects more than myself, will imitate my philosophy, I hope, keeping strong with me?"

"Yes," answered Sarah.

"She was not brought up to expect riches, and riches can pass away without repining at their loss, for she is young and true."

"If they pass from me to you——"

"As they will not, Sarah," he said—"as they never will."

He looked at the paper for the first time. It was a brief will, which a few lines made clear. It was written by Simon Culwick himself, and witnessed by two servants who had left the house two years since; and it left, as Reuben had imagined from the first, the whole of his

property, free and indivisible, to his old friend's child, his faithful housekeeper, Mary Holland.

He refolded the will, and regarded attentively his second-cousin, who remained dumb with amazement.

"And Mary Holland I have turned out of her own house, so that she is not here to receive our congratulations," said Reuben Culwick coolly.

## CHAPTER IV.

## CONSOLATION.

REUBEN had acted like a philosopher in this matter, and he took the final disposal of the Culwick property in a way that showed his heart was not deeply affected by its loss. Here was Second-cousin Sarah to keep him strong, and to keep strong by his example. It was her loss rather than his own ; and to show that he valued her affection above the riches that she might have brought him, was an opportunity not lightly to be missed. For Sarah Eastbell was not a philosopher, after all ; she was unselfish, but she gave way for the sake of him whom she

had no power now to make rich. She went from the window with her hands before her face, and sat down trembling in the arm-chair wherein her grandmother had died protesting her faith in her.

She was crying, Reuben saw, when he had drawn the thin hands from her face, and was looking tenderly into her tear-dimmed eyes.

“Courage, Sarah!” he said; “you have never cared for the splendour of this place; you wanted to give it all away, you know.”

“And now I cannot help you!”

“Oh! yes, you can.”

“I am a burden on your life, Reuben,” she murmured, “for you are very poor, like me. I must forget what you have said, and you—you must never think of me again.”

“And what else?” he said.

He perched himself on the broad arm of the chair, and looked down laughingly at her, resting his hand lightly on her shoulder.

"I cannot make you rich now," she faltered forth.

"I did not ask Sarah Eastbell to be my wife because she was an heiress," he replied, "but because she was the most unselfish, the most faithful little woman whom I had ever met. She made my heart light when I was losing faith in humankind, and I am not going to part with her again."

"I do not see any hope for you and me now, Reuben," said Sarah sadly; "we must find Miss Holland."

"Yes, we must find Miss Holland," he echoed; "what will *she* say to this accession of fortune?"

"Is she not aware of it?"

"The will was sealed. It was placed in her hands, to be opened at some future period and some stated date, I think, and most probably without a knowledge of its contents."

"And then?" said Sarah wonderingly.

"And then, when the usurpers were at rest,



and had grown purse-proud and ungrateful, this mine was to be sprung beneath their feet. It is after my poor father's fashion, and I bear him no ill-will for thinking of Miss Holland. She was a friend to him; I was his enemy to the last."

"Not his enemy, Reuben."

"I might have acted in so different a way," he said regretfully, "and he might have parted with me in less enmity. A few more kind words between us might have changed his life as well as mine."

"You would have been in this house as its master."

"I was not thinking of that," said Reuben, "for by this will I am not left a poorer man. Cannot I prove I love my second-cousin for herself, if she has doubted it before this day?"

"No, Reuben, I never doubted it. I have been happy enough to win your love, but I should be very selfish to seek to keep it now."

"Do you regret the coming change in your position?"

"Yes."

"For yourself?"

"No—no—for you. Oh! Reuben," she cried suddenly and passionately, "I would not marry you for all the world."

She shrank at last from the touch of his hand upon her shoulder, and bent her head away from him.

"What does it matter, Sarah, if we are going to be poor instead of rich?—we two together!"

"You have been always unhappy in your poverty," she murmured, "only an hour or two ago you told me this."

It was hard to have a few jesting words hurled back at him in sober earnest, but he was not to be baffled by his second-cousin in this way. He had mastered the position, and he understood all that was in her mind, he thought.

"I have been unhappy in my poverty, be-

cause I have been alone in it, without a hope, Sarah," he said more earnestly; "I should go back to it trebly miserable if you feared to share it with me."

"I fear it for your sake."

"God forbid that I should be coward enough to drag you down to it from this," said Reuben, "or expose you to all the miseries of my petty indigence. But you are young, and I am not old, and time is before us both. Are we going to say good-bye because Simon Culwick leaves his money to his housekeeper?"

"We must cancel this engagement," said Sarah less resolutely, "I—I—am in your way."

"We will cancel no promises that we made a good old woman," answered Reuben; "I will not release you from your word. I see debts growing less—work more remunerative—a little suburban cottage somewhere for two simple folk of scanty means, but great big hearts, and it is only waiting for a while. Let the money pass from every thought of ours; it has

brought you trouble—it has led others to crime, and the blessing of our life lies a long way beyond it. Why, Sarah, I am proud of my poverty at last !”

Reuben had grown quite eloquent—Lucy Jennings would have told him to keep his fine tall talk for the books that he could not sell, but the little trustful heart at his side knew only that he talked “like a book,” though he talked in earnest. After this she was glad to be persuaded that Reuben would be happy with her, rather than without her—that she could only add to his troubles by setting him free, or to his happiness by believing in his love ; and she was too young to grieve long over her incapacity to make him master of his father’s house.

She did not study the position of affairs after his last speech ; she was happier poor than rich, perhaps ; she agreed to all his reasoning, she looked forward with him to the future, as he sketched it for her with those cheering words of his which made her heart glow. Here were the

true courting days then, the happy days which no after time could take away. If she looked back at them presently, as at things gone by for ever, if they faded by rough contact with the world, still they were no less bright for being looked at through a rain of tears, and there were no regrets for unwise words or deeds to mar the recollection of that day.

The happiness born of it, and of faith in each other, might not last, but then the bliss that endures lies beyond the arid sands of our mother earth.

## CHAPTER V.

## TOTS' NURSE.

THE Winter set in sharply that year, like the sudden frost to the hopes of Reuben Culwick and his second-cousin. It was a severe Winter, that nipped things to the heart before the old year was seven days dead. A few weeks had gone by since the date of our last chapter, and all with whom we are interested, or in whom we have endeavoured to raise an interest, had settled down to the position born of the discovery of Miss Holland's good fortune.

Miss Holland had not been found, despite

much pertinacious searching; the boxes remained unclaimed at Sedge Hill, and Sedge Hill was held in trust for her. Those interested in advertisements wondered who Miss Holland was, and why her friends were begging her to return, and hear of something to her advantage; and private inquiry offices, taking up the matter on the strength of future emolument, set all their complex machinery in motion, and ground not out one spot of information.

Reuben accepted the position very cheerfully, although Lucy Jennings thought that he was too cheerful to be natural. He was anxious to see the provisions of his father's will carried out in their entirety, and he showed no sense of disappointment at the low estate to which they infallibly reduced him. He had confidence in himself, and he was anxious to do justice to Mary Holland, despite the unjust character of a will which struck him out of affluence.

His father's last wishes were to be respected, though his father had never loved him, or un-

derstood him, or regarded one wish of the son's. He was anxious to abide by the strict letter of the law, and know no disappointment afterwards. His sphere of life would remain for ever a low one, but there would be more content in it than all the splendour of Sedge Hill, without his cousin, could have given him. These were the happiest days now, considering all things; for he was a strong man, with his heart at rest.

He was rising in the world, too. The work grew under his hand, debts became less, more money fell to his share from the great lottery-bag of letters, and if there were no big prizes, still he drew no blanks. Amongst the busy unknown crowd of clever "newspaper men," he was already known, and three weeks ago the promoters of the *Trumpet* had burst out with big offices and more machinery, and higher terms for Reuben, who had been with them in struggling days, and was now called upon to share in their prosperity a little.



Reuben was content, then ; he had found his right level, and his hopes of being famous he had given up for good. He had not failed with his pen because the world had not cared for his novel ; he had found that his main strength lay in another direction, where fair profits would follow, and where the strongest and best work goes on steadily day by day, without a flourish on each occasion over the details.

He was happy in his courtship too, for he found many opportunities to see his second-cousin Sarah, and she was glad—ah!—very glad to see him. Sarah was in London—in apartments in York Road, Lambeth, with the woman who had striven hard not to have her for a companion or friend, and yet whom she had conquered by that sweet persistency which was an attribute of her character. Sarah Eastbell was very much alone in the world now, and when the signal of distress had been raised, Lucy Jennings, with all her hardness, was at her best, and ready to be of assistance. When

the woman-preacher had done her work, she would begin her scoldings and repinings—never before—and then she scolded and repined with a vengeance. She did not like Sarah Eastbell, she had honestly confessed once, and if Sarah had asked her for an opinion she would have given it almost in the same words, although she was willing to take care of her. She was as kind as in Hope Street days, perhaps, although there were strange sullen fits that were incomprehensible to every one. She and Reuben did not exchange sharp words as heretofore ; but Lucy was cold and distant, and Reuben had grown strangely deferential. He put himself out of the way to be complaisant to Lucy Jennings, but Lucy was not softened by the effort.

“It’s because you are here that he plays the hypocrite,” said Lucy one day to Sarah.

“It is because he has learned to understand your good heart,” Sarah replied.

“He always hated me,” affirmed Lucy, “al-

though he disguised it for a time—whilst his mother lived, and I took care of her, as I take care of you. He thinks when he smiles a little, and drops his hateful jesting at religion, or at me, that he is showing his gratitude for all I have done.”

“Now, Lucy——”

“I don’t want to argue about it—I am not likely to be deceived,” said Lucy, and she hurried away to evade a discussion on the subject, which always disturbed her variable temper the most.

Reuben came courting in the evening once or twice a week at first, when the newspapers would allow him; and there were odd half-holidays, when Reuben and Sarah would stroll in St. James’s Park, and talk of the happiness ahead. They both spoke of the patience to wait for each other—of a calm present and a happy future—and they laughed together, not before Lucy, at Lucy’s past forebodings of the misery in store for them. They laughed at the

riches of Sedge Hill too, these happy philosophers whom love had made strong, and the epochs of past privation, of past misunderstanding, became the fairest reminiscences in the clearer light about their lives. They loved each other all the more, these two, talking of the railway station in the rain, where Sarah Eastbell was first of service to her cousin; of the almshouses of St. Oswald, where he thought her a cross-tempered and untruthful girl; of the Saxe-Gotha Gardens, and Potter's Court, and Hope Street, all shining in the sun now, with their hard angles softened down and tipped with gold.

The special reporting was the one drawback to perfect peace—Reuben was clever at this, and was worth more money at it than his employers cared to inform him, though they did not begrudge him a few extra guineas. When there were stirring times in the provinces, Reuben was dispatched to report upon them—and he had flitted once to Paris, in the stormy days

when "a little revolution" was on the cards, and Sarah was dull and miserable till he came back safe and sound again. When he was very busy—and he got unnaturally busy by degrees—when he was earning money with a fair amount of rapidity, Sarah became less happy, because she saw less of him—because a week would pass, and nothing but hasty lines on odd sheets of paper told her of his existence. Lucy Jennings was grave at these periods too, and regarded Sarah with a grim attention that she did not at first explain, although a time came for explanation before the Spring buds were green.

Tots was at Reuben's house in Drury Lane, too. His love for this little waif was still as much part of his life as his love for his second-cousin. Tots belonged to old days; she had been his one comfort when he felt wholly desolate; she had been lost, and his heart had been terribly wrung in losing her; she was back, and as fond of him as ever, although there had come

never again a memory of Hope Street. His landlord's wife took care of her as Lucy Jennings had done, and it was pleasant to have Tots with him at breakfast time—his only leisure hour very often—or Tots sitting quietly with her doll in a corner of his room, whilst he worked on with his “copy.”

When the extraordinary rush of business set in at which we have hinted, there came a strange nurse for Tots—a faithful attendant, who took Tots for long walks, and was very careful of her, and drank no whiskey till he had brought her back in safety to Reuben's apartments. It need hardly be said that this was the weak and maimed John Jennings, whom his sister had not forgiven, although Reuben Culwick had.

Lucy Jennings, as well as Reuben, found a little money for John ; and John at times, and in firework seasons, worked as journeyman to pyrotechnic artists greater than he—or who had certainly not blown themselves up so often—and did justice to his employers, until whiskey

came in his way after a week's savings, and he fuddled himself out of his situation by slow and sure degrees.

Still John was a capital nurse, and he had been always fond of Tots. He taught her to call him Uncle John again, and though the child was older and sharper than when Reuben found her first in Camberwell, there was quickly a return to the old affection, under the old kindness and attention. Life with Captain Peterson and his brothers had not hurt her—it was part of a bad dream in the beginning of the new year, though the dream-figures had scarcely vanished, and one presently crossed her path, and startled her.

This was the man whom she had seen frequently at her father's house, who had lodged with them at the button-factory, and of whom she had caught a glimpse even at Sedge Hill. Tots and John Jennings were in the main thoroughfare of Holborn, both interested in the shops, when he touched Tots on the arm.

"Don't you know me?" he asked in a husky voice.

Tots gave a little scream, and clung more closely to John Jennings.

"Oh! don't let him take me away!" she cried at once.

"I don't want to take you away, Bessie—I only want to ask you how you are, after all these months," said Thomas Eastbell, offering a very dirty hand to the child to shake.

"Come, you let her alone, will you?" said John Jennings sharply. John did not admire the looks of the man who had forced himself upon the notice of Reuben's adopted child; John held Tots in trust, and was watchful of his charge. The man before him was a forlorn specimen of humanity, ragged and dirty, with an old great-coat hanging loosely on an attenuated frame, and a red worsted comforter twisted round a neck which seemed less bull-like than usual, despite its wrappings. John did not know Thomas Eastbell at first sight, but



he was a judge of disreputability—he had seen so much of it in Hope Street—he had become so disreputable himself.

“I have as much right to the child as you have,” said Tom in a surly tone, “or as your master has, for the matter of that. The child’s stole, and you know it.”

“I don’t know it.”

“And its father will come to claim it precious quick too—see if he don’t—and you can tell Mr. Culwick too, directly you get home. Say Tom Eastbell told him so—or Vizzobini. You ought to know Vizzobini of the Saxe-Gotha.”

John Jennings was surprised at last. He held the child more tightly by the hand, and said—

“You are Thomas Eastbell, then?”

“Yes, and I don’t care who knows it. You can give me in charge if you like—say for coining last year—I shall do it myself in an hour or two if you don’t—I hate the workus, and it’s awful cold outside the prison. Where’s Sally?”

"Your sister, do you mean?"

"Yes, of course I do," answered Tom; "she ain't at Sedge Hill."

"Never mind where she is."

"Oh! I don't mind. She won't help me—I'm her only brother, and starving in the streets. But you can take my compliments to her, Mr. Jennings, and I'm to be heard of at the 'Magpie.'"

"That's over the way, isn't it?"

"Yes—the next street," he added with a jerk of the thumb in the direction which he desired to indicate.

"I shan't tell her anything of the kind," said John Jennings sturdily.

"You could let her know I'm starving—and I'm sorry—and my wife's run away from me. Blest if I've set eyes on the old 'ooman since that young cat" (turning sharply on Tots) "took a key from the door, and let the couple of 'em out."

"Think yourself lucky you are not in prison

for that," cried John Jennings, indignantly.

"I want to go to prison—it's comfortable—it's warm—and it will disgrace the fam'ly a little more. If nobody comes to me at the 'Magpie' to-night, with an odd sixpence, I shall disgrace the family. I shall give myself up."

"It's the best thing you can do. You'll be out of the way."

"I'll put you out of the way, old man, if you give me any of your sauce," snarled Thomas Eastbell, groping in his right-hand coat-pocket in a manner that suggested clasp-knives.

John Jennings was not naturally a brave man. He turned and fled, dragging Tots not unwillingly along with him. Thomas Eastbell stood on the edge of the curb, and watched their unceremonious retreat, his little sharp eyes glinting from under the broken peak of his cap. When they had turned the corner of the street, he followed them, seized with a sudden desire

to track them home, to ascertain the dwelling-place of Reuben Culwick, or his sister Sarah. John Jennings and Tots both looked behind, saw him in their wake, and went on at a more rapid pace; and Thomas Eastbell, exulting in their fear of him, increased his rate of progression after them.

It was a brief pursuit—a tall thin man, in a fur cap, sauntering along on the opposite side of the way, with his hands in his pockets, and a thick yellow stick under his arm, stopped the chase, though he was unaware of it to his dying day. Tom saw him, recognized in him an active member of the detective force, Scotland Yard, and slunk away into a side-court at once. Tom was in great difficulties, and had determined to try prison fare for a change, he said, but his nerves were not wholly strung to the sacrifice, and the sudden sight of a policeman in private clothes turned him heart-sick.

He would keep out of the way a little

while longer, if he could. The world was against him, and even his old pals would have nothing to do with him, but liberty was precious, after all.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE "MAGPIE."

REUBEN CULWICK was hard at *Trumpet* work when John Jennings and Tots arrived home with the news of their meeting with Thomas Eastbell. He was working against time somewhat, but he set his pen aside to listen to John Jennings' recital and Tots' scared interpellations, paying particular attention to Mr. Eastbell's information that the child would be fetched away presently by her father.

"And he said that Sarah might hear of him at the 'Magpie?'"

"Yes," answered John Jennings.

"Where's the 'Magpie?'"

"It's a little public in Barker's Street, where they sell very fair whiskey."

"Ah! yes, poor John, I suppose you know it," said Reuben, shaking his head at him. "Well, will you go there this evening for me, and face that man again?"

"If—if you wish it, I will," answered John, taken aback by the request.

Reuben had promised to see Sarah that evening. It was a leisure night, on which Reuben could leave work with an easy conscience; and he had written that morning, announcing his intention of calling at York Road; and now Thomas Eastbell, her brother, had started up, and he felt that he had more than one question to ask him. He could not trust John Jennings at a whiskey-shop, and in Tots' defence, perhaps in Sarah's, it might be necessary to proceed with caution. He wished to see Captain Peterson too, and Tom Eastbell might be able,

for a bribe, to tell him where he was. He must act for himself, and with caution. He would not alarm Sarah by any mention of her brother's name at present. She was easily excited, and for ever in fear of the scamp.

"John," he said, suddenly, "you must take a letter to Sarah at once."

"Very well, Mr. Reuben."

"Don't say anything of your meeting with her brother?"

"Trust me for that," said John, knowingly.

"She is not strong enough for any fresh trouble," said Reuben, as he drew a sheet of notepaper towards him, and wrote very reluctantly an excuse for not being able to see her, as he had promised. He alleged no reason—he would explain when he saw her, he said; and he re-read the letter somewhat critically after he had finished the writing of it. It was a brief epistle; he should see her to-morrow, he hoped, and that would be time enough for



explanation of his breach of promise. Sarah trusted him implicitly, and would know that only business of importance could keep him from her. She did not expect a long letter from him, and a heap of reasons, at that busy hour of the day. Let the letter go.

In the evening, somewhat late, Reuben Culwick, not too fashionably attired, was at the bar of the "Magpie," endeavouring to relish the ale with which its proprietors had furnished him, and smoking a pipe by way of giving character to his present appearance. On a Saturday night the "Magpie" was full of customers, chance and regular, and his presence called for no particular degree of attention. The "Magpie" was a respectable house in its way; that is, it did not put itself out of the way to become a very bad one. Bad characters, patent to bad neighbourhoods, came in and out at all hours for their drams, and were welcome enough so that they paid their money and drank their liquids without quarrelling over them.

But the landlord was respectable, and had no back parlours wherein thieves might congregate and talk treason against householders. When thieves required stimulants in front of the bar, which they often did, they could have it as well as honest men, and their money was as welcome to the "Magpie's" rattling till.

It was eight o'clock, or later, when Thomas Eastbell's pock-marked countenance peered round one of the swing-doors. The "Magpie" was Tom's forlorn hope. He had sent a message to his sister, and she might attend to it. Who knows? He caught sight of Reuben Culwick, and his first impulse was to back into the street. Then he wavered; and whilst he was hesitating, along with a crowd of orange-women and costermongers, Reuben came from the public-house and confronted him.

"You need not run away, Tom Eastbell," said Reuben.

"You're not going to split on me?"

"No."

"I haven't done you any harm," he returned ;  
"I haven't done nobody any harm—never. All that you have heard about me has been a pack of lies. I've been as honest as I could be, and this is what comes of it."

"Indeed !"

"I'm hard-up—I'm starving. Wish I may die, Mr. Culwick, but I haven't tasted food to-day?"

"Where are your friends?"

"I haven't got none."

"That's hard," said Reuben ; "but the Peters-  
sons?"

"They turned me out of their house. They said I was a blundering fool. One of 'em kicked me, last time I saw him."

"The captain?"

Tom Eastbell laughed sardonically.

"No, he can't kick. He broke both his legs in the country, jumping from a window of the button-factory to get out of the way of the police. He can only swear and cuss me now."

“But——”

“But talking’s dry work,” was Tom’s quiet hint.

Reuben Culwick took the hint. There was information to be gained from this outcast, with whom crime had not agreed, and Thomas Eastbell was to be rendered communicative at a small outlay. They re-entered the “Magpie,” where Reuben, at his request, gave him cold gin and Abernethy biscuits, the former of which was tilted speedily down his throat, and the latter voraciously devoured. He was a thorough black-guard, but Reuben felt a strange kind of pity for his low condition, villain as he was. Was he not going to be a relation by marriage, too? Reuben thought, as he watched him tearing wolf-like at his biscuits.

“Have you brought me any money from Sarah?” Thomas Eastbell asked, suddenly and eagerly.

“Not a penny.”

“Now, that’s too bad——”

Reuben did not allow him to finish the sentence.

"Your sister Sarah is very poor. Another will of my father's has been found," Reuben condescended to explain, "and she has no money to spare for you, even if she had the inclination."

"Good lor! Then you——"

"I have brought you a little money, though I am poor too. Your sister has done with you for ever."

"So she said, sir. It was an unfeeling speech," he added with a faltering voice, "and I've never got over it. But poor, you say?"

"Very poor."

"I don't believe a word of it," he muttered.

"I haven't come here to explain," said Reuben, "only to give you a couple of sovereigns—more than I can afford—for information."

"Oh, that's it," said Tom artfully; "well, sovereigns are sovereigns just now. Hand them over, governor."

"First—is this Edward Peterson the father of the little girl you met this morning?"

"He says he is. He gave me money to take care of her altogether. But it wasn't enough, so I lost her," said Tom coolly—"or rather," he added, interpreting Reuben's look of disgust correctly, "my old woman lost her. It was her fault. She never had a mite of feeling in her for anybody save herself."

"And I found the child when she was lost."

"And then Peterson turned up, and stormed and raved at me, till I told him where the child was, and he stole it from you back again. He was fond of that child when he was in a good temper, which wasn't often, though."

"His wife—is she dead?"

"Long ago, he tells me."

"Where is Edward Peterson now?"

"In Worcester—Mitcheson's Place, near the river—and you can put the bobbies on to him, if they're not taking care of him already. He has treated me bad enough."

"How's that?"

"He says it's all my fault that—are you going to stand any more gin?"

"Here is your money. Do what you like with it."

"Thankee. Are you going to split on Ned Peterson? Ha! ha! He can't run away."

"Who is with him?"

"An old sweetheart, who will marry him when his legs get better. She has always been dead nuts on him, Ned tells me."

"Is it Mary Holland?"

"That's her name. The woman who was at Sedge Hill. You know her well enough."

"And she is with Edward Peterson at Worcester?"

"Yes."

Reuben Culwick waited for no further news; he had learned more than he had anticipated; he thought he saw all very clearly to the end now, and where his duty lay. He darted from the friendly shelter of the "Magpie," and hur-

ried into Holborn, and from Holborn through sundry back turnings into Drury Lane, where he met John Jennings, who passed a great deal of his time walking up and down the street in which Reuben Culwick resided.

"John," said he, seizing him by the arm, "are yon sober?"

"Quite sober," answered John.

"Not quite. You have had a glass, you dolt!"

"Only one. It's such a dreadfully cold night."

"Don't take any more. Think what a fool it makes of you, John, and what Lucy will say."

"Lucy!" said John aghast. "I'm not going to see her again to-night, am I?"

"You must go to your sister's house once more."

"Oh, gracious!"

"You must see Sarah——"

"Bless her, yes! If I had married her, Mr.



Reuben, what a different man I should have been! What a——”

“You have had more than one glass. You’re maudlin.”

“Only one since tea, upon my honour!”

“Where did you have tea?”

“Since tea-time, speaking more correctly. But I am sober, Mr. Reuben—I really am.”

“Find Sarah Eastbell. Tell her I have discovered that Miss Holland is in Worcester, that I have left London in search of her, and to end all suspense at once—her suspense as well as mine.”

“Yes.”

“I hope to be back on Monday.”

“Is that all?”

“Yes. Now be off at once.”

Reuben hurried to his lodgings, begged his landlady to be careful of Tots until his return, looked in at Tots sleeping calmly in her little crib, stooped over her and kissed her without awakening her, and then hurried away to the

railway station, in the hope of catching a night mail that should carry him on a portion of his journey towards Worcester.

## CHAPTER VII.

## IN WORCESTER AGAIN.

REUBEN CULWICK was in the loyal city early the next day. He had travelled by a round-about route, catching a night mail that took him a certain distance on his way, whereby he was enabled to start early for Worcester on the following morning, in search of Mary Holland. He passed over some superfluous ground, but he saved valuable time—on Monday he hoped to be back at his work in Drury Lane, as if nothing so serious had happened as the surrender of all his claims, on his part and his cousin's, to the estate at Sedge

Hill. He should be happier when that was settled, he thought; when he had found Mary Holland, and surprised her by the news of her good fortune. Whether she deserved that fortune or not, he did not stop to consider—she was a mystery to him, and would probably remain so to the end of the chapter. Perhaps he had misjudged her—possibly she had betrayed Sarah Eastbell—certainly she was in league with Edward Peterson—and under all circumstances of life his father had willed that Mary Holland should come into the property. So be it. It was his father's last wish, and it should be carried out to the letter and in the right spirit. It was the one wish of his father's that he had respected of late days, and there was a strange satisfaction in setting about its accomplishment. After all, he did not care for money, for he took extraordinary pains to get his father's property out of his reach, as if to prove in his latter days how far he was above its temptations.

The cathedral bells were ringing when he was searching in Mitcheson's Place for Edward Peterson. The man who had leaped from the top window of the button-factory, and broken both his legs, was not difficult to find—the inhabitants of Mitcheson's Place knew all about him, who he was, and where he was, and the county police had been watching for his convalescence, for weeks past, in order to conduct him to safe quarters. Edward Peterson was too ill to be moved at present—indeed of late days the police had not been vigilant, a turn for the worse having taken place in the sick man's condition, and it being tolerably certain that he was drifting from the laws of his country in undue haste.

Reuben understood the position before he had reached the house—a policeman on duty in the street gave him the fullest particulars, when he was certain that Reuben was not one of the gang who had swamped Worcester with pewter half-crowns—and he went up the steep

and rickety stairs of the place, wondering if he should meet Miss Holland after all, and of the nature of the tie between her and the coiner that had taken her from their side to his. There could be only one solution to the riddle, he thought, and he was close upon it.

It was the back room of the first floor to which he had been directed, and where he knocked softly for admittance. Some one crossed the room lightly, opened the door, and looked hard at him, with the colour flickering faintly on her cheeks. It was Mary Holland, pale and thin, who faced him on the landing-place, drawing the door behind her very carefully, so that the whispers of their conference might not reach the ears of him who lay within the chamber.

"You have found me at last, then?" she inquired.

They did not shake hands—the shadow of the past mistrust was still between them, and there was no getting from it in the first moments of their meeting.

"You know that we have been searching for you—advertising for you?" said Reuben.

"Yes, but I did not care to answer yet," she replied.

"You are attending upon Edward Peterson?"

"My husband—yes."

"Your husband!" repeated Reuben slowly.

He was prepared for the avowal; he had looked forward to this explanation, and yet it came to him with a surprise for which he could scarcely account.

"He is wholly friendless now—he is terribly alone—and at the last I have found the courage to do my duty," she said.

"Then the little girl—Tots——"

"Is mine. God bless her! yes. It was his promise that I should have the child back—it was the revelation that she lived—that kept me silent when my suspicions might have given a clue to the truths which perplexed you. To have betrayed him at that bitter hour was

to kill my little girl. He swore it—and I knew how desperate a man he was, years ago,” she added sadly. “When he first came to Sedge Hill, I wrote, warning you of danger—but not knowing what the danger was which threatened Sarah Eastbell.”

“I see,” murmured Reuben Culwick.

“I was a woman in the toils, and knew not what to do,” she continued. “When Sarah had disappeared, he said she should return in safety to Sedge Hill, if I would keep my peace—and I was forced to trust him. Ah, sir, do not blame me too harshly—it was my child’s life, my child’s happiness against Sarah Eastbell’s, and I acted like a mother, in the one hope of clasping her to my heart. I could not have brought your cousin back, had I owned that man for my husband—I was in the dark with you—and my little Bessie lived.”

“I understand,” said Reuben, still thoughtfully.

“When the child did not come to me—when



I thought he had deceived me—I grew mad and desperate. It was I who set the police in search of Edward Peterson—who gave the clue by which they knew where to find him—who accompanied them to identify a man of whom they had been long in search—who betrayed him and brought about this tragedy. Heaven help me!" she added, very sorrowfully, "I have been always in the wrong."

"What does he say?"

"He has not forgiven me," she said, "but I am at his side to the last—asking for no thanks, expecting none."

"Is there any hope of his life?"

"Not any."

"Is he aware of his approaching end?"

"At times," was the reply; "and at times he loses all recollection of his danger, and talks of a future which can never come."

"And you love this man?"

She answered, "He killed my love years ago. I do my duty in calm apathy, that is all."

“Poor woman !”

“Years ago, he was my hero. He was honest then, and I was very young,” she said. “We were married secretly. When he grew tired of me, when he went wrong, he abandoned me without remorse, and took my child with him, in a spirit of revenge that nearly broke my heart. My marriage and that child’s birth were not known to the world I found at Worcester—although your mother always doubted me. I tried hard to live apart from the past, when I believed my little girl was dead, but it all came back last Autumn. This,” she added, almost bitterly, “is a strange time for explanation.”

“I have not come for explanation—I have no right to demand it,” said Reuben, “but let me ask if my father knew of your marriage to Edward Peterson.”

“I dared not tell him. I was very poor—I was alone in the world, without a friend, and he had confidence in me, and liked me for my

dead father's sake. Would he have wished you to marry me, had he dreamed of this?" she added, with an impressive gesture towards the door of the sick-room.

"Why did he wish this marriage?" said Reuben.

"He told me on the day he died that he had ruined my father—deceived him in some way of business, and got rich by his disgrace," she said. "Heaven knows if this were true, or the wanderings of a demented mind. It is beyond our guessing at, and belongs not to our present lives."

"Mary Holland, it was true," said Reuben, solemnly—"I bring a proof of it, in his atonement—reparation."

"Impossible."

"He has left you all his money."

There was a wild scream—an awful yell from the room which Mary Holland, or rather Mary Peterson, had quitted; and Mary ran back into the chamber, followed by Reuben, in

his haste to be of assistance to the affrighted woman.

It was only a cry of delight. Captain Peterson had heard all the news.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## EDWARD PETERSON LOOKS FORWARD.

THE man sick unto death lay in his bed a prey to violent excitement, Reuben saw at the first glance as he stood with Mary looking down at Edward Peterson. The eyes were widely distended, and two claw-like hands had clutched at the bed-curtains in a vain effort to raise the body, whilst the whole room vibrated with the passion which shook the sufferer. It was a ghastly face that met Reuben Culwick's at this juncture, and the terrible earnestness and greed stamped on it was not a pleasant sight to witness.

"Is it all true?" he gasped forth, turning to Reuben as if to a friend on whom, in this crisis of his life, he might rely.

"It is true," responded our hero.

"That she has got the money—that it is all left to her; for God's sake don't keep me in suspense! Think what a deal depends upon my being calm just now!" he cried.

"All the money is left to Mary Holland," answered Reuben.

"How is it—how is it that—that—this can be?" he inquired, catching at Reuben's hand, and clasping it with his trembling fingers; "you see how excited I am—but I can bear good news. Good news will save me yet—please Heaven."

Reuben looked across at Mary, who said, in a low tone—

"Tell him."

"There has been discovered another will, signed by my father the day before his death."

"Yes—yes; go on."

"In it my father bequeaths the whole of his property to his faithful friend and housekeeper, Mary Holland."

"That's my wife," said Peterson, quickly—"don't forget she's my wife. We were legally married years ago; upon my soul, I swear it—it's easily proved—isn't it easily proved, Mary? Tell him so—don't stare at me like that!"

"Yes, I am his wife," said Mary, thus appealed to; "I am not Mary Holland."

"Oh! that makes no difference," cried Peterson. "You were Mary Holland; you have always been known by that name to old Culwick, and it's your money, by Heaven it is!—I know law enough for that. All yours—and all your husband's; why, it's as clear as daylight. This brings me—back—to—life!"

The fingers relaxed their grasp of Reuben's, the eyes closed, and a dull leaden hue spread itself over the face.

"He is dying!" cried Reuben.

"No," said the wife; "it is only the re-action which has exhausted him."

She placed a glass to his lips, and he drank with difficulty of the spirit which it contained; after which his eyes opened, and he lay and looked at them, his breath flickering at his grey lips like a dying man's. He was too weak to speak, and, conscious of his weakness, he lay and gathered power to himself, watching the wife and visitor meanwhile.

"Why did you come at such a time as this?" Mary said, reproachfully.

"I was anxious you should know the truth."

"I knew it long ago," she answered.

Reuben uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Was not the will given to me?" she asked.

"But you were unaware of its contents?"

"No," said Mary; "he told me, on the day he left for London, what was in the will entrusted to my care."

"And you have not acted upon it; you have suffered a prior will to be proved—you have preferred to be poor!" he cried.



"I have preferred, Reuben Culwick, to wait," she said, coldly, "to see who were my friends or enemies—who loved me a little, and who distrusted me altogether. Take that for all the answer I can afford you now."

"Where—is—the will?" said a voice like a sick child's.

They turned. Edward Peterson's interest had re-awakened in the great question of his life—of the little life that was left in him.

"I have brought it with me."

"Give it—to me," said Peterson; "it isn't safe in other hands. I—I will keep it till I'm—stronger."

Reuben hesitated.

"Let him have it," said the wife, carelessly; "it will calm him—and rest is necessary."

"I would prefer your taking it, Mrs. Peterson," said Reuben, producing the will; "better still to leave it with a trustworthy solicitor to act upon. There will be no opposition to it in any way from Sarah Eastbell."

"It will be safe enough in my husband's keeping," said Mary, with strange listlessness.

Reuben gave her the will, and she crossed with it to her husband's side, and placed it in his hands, which with great difficulty began to unfold the paper on which Simon Culwick's last testament was written.

"I—I shall be glad—when I'm better," Edward Peterson whispered at last; "you can put it under my pillow now."

Mary did so at his request.

"We may begin a different life together now, Mary," he said, with a sudden tenderness in his weak tones of voice which was startling at that time; "I only wanted to be rich—it was poverty that made me bad—that turned me wrong altogether."

"Don't speak any more," adjured his wife.

"You kept this back—because you were—afraid of me?"

There was no reply.

"Why don't you answer?" he cried, querulously.

"I was afraid of you," she replied. "I knew that with these riches there would come from you cruelty and oppression. I was happier in my dependence."

"But when I get better?"

She looked sadly at him.

"When you get better, Edward, we will claim the money which Simon Culwick has left me."

"That's a good—girl. That's well," he cried exultantly. "I thought, Mary, there was some *plant* in this. I couldn't see why——"

"Couldn't see what?" inquired his wife, as he came suddenly to a stop.

"I couldn't see why you should care for me like this—after the scamp that I have—been—to you."

"I betrayed you in my rage and haste. It is all my work," she said regretfully, "and I am at your side again."

"It was a mad trick, certainly," he muttered, "and you—couldn't trust me. Ah! that's like a woman!"

"It is like a woman, Peterson, to take her place here, wife, and nurse, and comforter, in the hour of your distress," said Reuben.

Edward Peterson looked hard at Reuben Culwick, and a faint smile hovered at his lips.

"Are you a preacher?" he asked.

"No."

"Then you must be trying to come round Mary—though, mark my words, she is not going to be a rich widow—yet awhile."

"Peace!" she murmured.

"I am—going to take care—of Mary now. We've forgotten our—old quarrels. It's all made up—we shall be happy—and rich—and very rich together. I wasn't always—a rascal, sir."

"And the child?" Reuben asked curiously.

A gesture, quick and deprecatory, from Mary

Holland, came too late to arrest the question, or to check the excitement of the prostrate vagabond, who half raised himself in bed in his vehemence.

"I'll never see the child again—I'd rather die than see her. She shall never be more than the beggar's brat she is!" he shouted.

"What has she done?"

"She turned against her own father—when there was a chance of making money, it was she, that cursed child, who betrayed me! My own child—the only thing I ever cared for. May she——"

The colour vanished from his face again, and once more the leaden hue suffused it, and the eyes closed as by the pressure of the hand of death itself upon them. Mary was at his side with the stimulant; when life seemed coming slowly back again, she said to Reuben,

"Leave me now. You see what he is—what he has ever been."

"We shall meet again."

"Yes. Take care of Bessie till I come for her."

"If I could help you in any way," said Reuben—"if Sarah Eastbell could be of service here with you—if——"

"I would prefer to be alone—to the end," she said in a low tone.

Reuben passed from the room and left the dying man to his strange wife's care. He had done his duty, he had surrendered his father's will into the hands of those whom it was to benefit, and it had been coldly, almost unthankfully received. Let him get back to Sarah Eastbell, and to the brighter life wherein she moved.

## CHAPTER IX.

## JOHN DELIVERS HIS MESSAGE.

JOHN JENNINGS departed on his mission to Sarah Eastbell late that Saturday evening in good faith. It was never a pleasant task to face his sister Lucy, at whose house Sarah was residing, for Lucy was always "down" upon him, and taking him to task for his numerous transgressions. Certainly Sarah would be at home, and that would be some recompense, although Lucy would not study her company, or "let him have it" less on account of the presence of a visitor. He was not drunk; he had not been too often to his favourite bars; but there was the painful consciousness of a cer-

tain amount of whiskey in his system that it was impossible to disguise from his lynx-eyed sister.

Reuben had seen it, and taxed him with it ; and Lucy, unless she was particularly busy that evening—and it being Saturday evening, when the sermons of to-morrow had to be considered, he prayed fervently she might be—would perceive it also.

John Jennings went down Bow Street and crawled over Waterloo Bridge for the second time that day, like a man going to be hanged ; and he thought so much of his meeting with Lucy, and so little of the nature of his errand, that he had only a confused idea of the message he had been entrusted to deliver, when he was clinging to the railings of the house on the first floor of which Miss Jennings resided.

Yes, poor John was very weak. It is charitable to believe that constant explosions of gunpowder had shattered his nerves as much as dram-drinking ; but he could not face his sister



again, so close upon her "Sunday conversation," too, without a further stimulant. He tried and failed, for he put his hand on the knocker and then fairly ran across the road to a gin-palace, where, at a small outlay, he fortified his nerves for the ordeal.

It was half an hour later in the night when he knocked at the door, and was presently stumbling up the stairs, a limp and miserable visitor. His modest tap at the door of the first floor was answered so quickly by a sharp "Come in," that he went down two steps in dismay before he resumed his progress and entered the room with gravity and decorum. He was not prepared at the York Road lodgings for half a dozen people besides his sister and Miss Eastbell, but he was glad to see them nevertheless. In a small crowd like this he might escape observation or comment. Lucy was at a table covered with books and papers, and Sarah Eastbell at her side was evidently acting as her amanuensis. The men and women in the room were poor cadaver-

ous beings, connected with the Jennings mission, and the order of the establishment under the railway-arch to-morrow, and were receiving their final instructions after general rule. There were books and tracts to give out, and reports of the day's proceedings to hear; and other co-operators in Lucy's good work followed John Jennings' advent, and sandwiched him in with serious-minded folk, and kept him from the fire and the door.

Lucy saw him on his first arrival, and Sarah smiled at him a welcome; but no one inquired his business, until an angular man on crutches at his side asked if he were a new convert to the blessed work. John Jennings shook his head and said he wasn't; at which piece of information the cripple hung on to the lappels of John's coat, and tried to convert him on the spot.

"Let him be, Hood," said Lucy Jennings, whom nothing escaped; "there is no hope for him. Where I have failed, you will fail."

"But we can't give him up."

"You can let go my coat, though," said John Jennings crossly; "what am I to do for buttons if you pull me about like this?"

"He is only a drunken brother of mine," said Lucy scornfully. "Take no heed of him; he is not in a fit state to be reasoned with upon the enormity of his iniquities," added Lucy, more sharply.

"Oh, I didn't want to come here," cried John. "I've brought a message from Mr. Culwick—that's all."

"Give it to me and go, then," said Lucy.

"It's not a letter. It's a verbal com-com-com-munication."

"I am sorry for it. Wait."

John Jennings found his way to the fire and to a chair, which he occupied in a sullen spirit, until he fell asleep with his chin upon his dirty shirt. How long he slept he never knew, but it was a deep and profound slumber, with so

much murmuring in his ears that he dreamed he was in Clare Market, haggling for to-morrow's dinner, until a heavy joint fell on him from the shop-blind of the butcher's, and he woke up with Lucy's hand upon his shoulder.

The room was empty of its visitors. Lucy was standing by his side, grimmer than ever ; and Sarah Eastbell was sitting opposite, watching him intently.

"Have you slept away your drunkenness, do you think?" asked Lucy.

"I haven't been asleep," said John.

"Oh, John, I think you have !" cried Sarah.

"Well, I may have dozed," he confessed, "just a little."

"What message have you brought from Mr. Culwick?" asked Sarah, very anxiously.

"What message? Ah! that's it! Wait a moment."

Lucy and Sarah waited several minutes, but John Jennings did not collect his faculties to-

gether, until Lucy told him to call to-morrow morning early, before the service commenced under the railway arch, if his message were really of importance. Then he dashed at something like the truth in his haste and confusion.

"Mr. Reuben won't be here to-morrow," he said.

Sarah Eastbell felt her heart sink, for she had not seen Reuben for many days, and he had put off calling that evening, and she had looked forward longingly to his Sunday visit to her—with wicked, worldly eyes, Lucy had already affirmed.

"Not coming?" said Sarah with a sigh. "Did he say why he had altered his mind again?"

"No—yes—yes, he did. He was going into the country with Miss Holland."

There was a long silence after this explanation, and Lucy and Sarah looked at each other

in a strange way, which John Jennings was not able to comprehend.

“What did I tell you long ago?” said Lucy in a low tone.

## CHAPTER X.

## A FEW WORDS.

THE inquiry which Lucy Jennings put to Sarah Eastbell was not responded to; the younger woman had turned her head away, and was looking very thoughtfully at the fire.

"Reuben Culwick knows where Miss Holland is, then?" Lucy asked of her brother.

"Oh, yes, he knows."

"Do you?"

"It's in the country somewhere."

"Worcester?" suggested his sister.

"Yes, Worcester; that's it."

"Then he started for Worcester this evening?"

"Yes; that's it again."

Lucy had no further questions to ask, and Sarah remained silent. John, half sleepy still, and half confused, rose to his feet and walked towards the door. He was conscious that he had not fulfilled his mission to perfection, but why he had blundered, or in what particular, he could not understand for the life of him. He had not made any mistake, but Lucy was looking very grave, and Sarah Eastbell did not speak to him. When he was at the door Sarah's voice arrested him, however.

"Did he say, John, when he should return?"

"Oh, yes—I had forgotten that. On Monday."

"Good night, John. Thank you for calling."

"Thank *you*," he answered, with a certain amount of emphasis.



"What for?" asked Lucy sharply.

"For many things. For not treating me quite like a brute," he added, with a flash of spirit.

"Are you any better than a brute to call here in this condition?" asked his sister.

"I'm in very good condition," said John. "I don't see anything the matter with me."

"When you do—when you are sure of what a poor degraded being you have become—I shall be glad, for it will be a sign of your repentance. It will be——"

"Good evening," said John Jennings, darting with alacrity from the room, to escape the sermon which threatened him. He had delivered his message—it was correct in all its details, he was certain—and he was not drunk. If he had taken too much whiskey, he would have blurted out that Reuben had met Thomas Eastbell, and so have frightened Sarah, who was afraid of her vagabond brother, he knew. They

had not received his message cheerfully—they were disappointed at Reuben's putting off his visit to them—but that was not his fault. He had done his best, and that Lucy had not received him cordially or treated him well, was only what he had expected from the first.

When the street door was heard to slam behind John Jennings, Lucy rose and moved about the room, putting her books and papers away, and setting the place in order for the night. Sarah did not help her; with her hands clutching her rounded chin, and her great dark eyes fixed upon the fire, she had passed away into a world of her own, wherein there was speculation and doubt. The stern woman, whose weakness it was to think herself above the world, glanced at her from the background with more sympathy upon her face than she was in the habit of exhibiting in Sarah Eastbell's affairs as a rule. Sarah, was downcast and disheartened that night, and Lucy watched her

furtively. There was trouble at the heart of Sarah Eastbell, and for Sarah's good she had planted it there by a few meaning words, not knowing what was the best for her, for all that. She thought that she did—but then she was not always in the right, poor Lucy.

She came back to Lucy's side at last, and drew her chair more closely to her. Sarah did not know she was there until Lucy touched her hand.

"You are seeing the truth, as I saw it long ago," said Lucy very gently to her; "I warned you to prepare for it."

"No," said Sarah hesitatingly, "I do not see it yet, as you see it."

"He comes less often here."

"Because his work accumulates," answered Sarah quickly, "not because he is tired of me. Ah, Lucy! you would not ask me to believe that, if you knew how much I loved him."

"I do not ask you to believe anything," said Lucy querulously.

"You are too suspicious of Reuben."

"I suspicious! What next?"

Lucy objected to the accusation. She had never been able to see her own faults clearly, and yet she believed that she judged herself unsparingly. It is the natural weakness of such good folk as Lucy Jennings sometimes.

"You consider Reuben is inventing excuses to keep away."

"I consider Reuben is very poor, and must work. I do not dispute that he loses money every time he spends an evening in this house—do you?" asked Lucy.

"Ah! my poor Reuben, whom I cannot help any longer!" cried Sarah, brushing some tears from her eyes with a hasty hand; "yes, he loses time and money—not very often now," she added with a sigh.

"He does not tell you he is poor," Lucy continued; "he is too proud for that; and when he says he is not busy, and comes here, I am dis-

trustful of the truth of his statement. But that is not being suspicious."

Sarah Eastbell did not feel disposed to continue the argument. In argument Lucy generally lost her temper, more especially when Reuben Culwick was the subject under discussion.

Lucy returned to the charge, however.

"I said a week or two ago that Reuben knew where Mary Holland was, but did not care to tell you."

"Why?"

"Because the discovery of her is complete poverty for you."

"I am not afraid of poverty."

"He is."

"No, Lucy—no!" cried Sarah, still more energetically; "don't tell me so. I am afraid of that—I try to keep it back!"

"I have seen it for some time," replied Lucy pityingly; "but is it not better to face the truth than to hide from it, when the truth tramps on and gets bigger every day?"

"I know, Lucy, what you think would be best now," said Sarah.

"Well—what?"

"That Reuben should marry Miss Holland."

"It would be better for him—yes," was the moody answer.

"He does not think so."

"He does not *say* so," answered Lucy. "He would never say it. He is pledged to you, and will marry you, unless you release him of your own free will. And, Sarah, however hard and cruel my advice may seem," she added solemnly, laying her hand upon Sarah's arm again, "it is the best for both of you."

"I try not to believe it," murmured Sarah, bowing her head lower.

"He has a right to his father's possessions; it was his father's wish, long ago, that he should marry Miss Holland. Has he not told us both so, with many a forced jest?"

"He has laughed at others arranging his life for him—that's all."

"What is this new will but the father's latest effort to bring a stubborn son to his senses—perhaps to a sense of justice?" said Lucy, restlessly.

"What do you mean?" asked Sarah, very quickly now.

"Don't ask me."

"Tell me what you mean?" demanded Sarah almost peremptorily.

"It is a thought which has haunted me for years," said Lucy, very gloomily, "but you had better leave me with it."

"No, not now."

"Call it a suspicion, I don't mind," said Lucy. "Heaven send I am in the wrong, in part; but men are weak and vain and wicked, all of them. Why should Reuben Culwick be an exception?"

"Tell me what is on your mind, Lucy!"

Lucy still hesitated. It was a bitter thought, which she preferred to keep rankling in her heart; but Sarah persisted.

"Lucy, I will know!" she cried.

"Not from me," said Lucy, "unless you guess already."

"You would imply—you dare to imply—that the father wished this marriage between them because it was the one honourable act of reparation which Reuben could make to Mary Holland!" cried Sarah. "Ha! is that it?"

"God knows," answered Lucy, "but I have thought so—yes."

"Then Heaven have mercy upon me!" cried Sarah, breaking down at last, and sobbing very passionately; "for if this is truth, I will never believe in anything again."

"Sarah Eastbell, you are foolish and wicked to say that."

"What have *you* said to-night?" was the passionate rejoinder. "He never saw her till he came to Worcester—till he——"

Sarah broke down again, and Lucy regarded her with more concern. The abandonment to grief of this young woman melted her once more.



"I have no proof of this, remember," Lucy said; "it may be the promptings of an evil heart, that will not let me think the best of him, but I have grown grey brooding over it. The father's wish—the quarrel between them—this last will—the child Reuben cares for so strangely, and whose loss changed him so much till he recovered her—the likeness of the child to Mary Holland——"

"Ha!" cried Sarah again.

"These seem to be links of a miserable commonplace story, of man's crime and woman's weakness."

"You are wrong!" cried Sarah.

"I pray I am, with all my soul," said Lucy.

"You are very wrong," Sarah added, in a lower tone, and Lucy repeated her wish that she might be; after which the two women stared at the fire together, seeing different scenes therein, and reading each other's hearts with singular incorrectness.

They were a long while silent, and it was Sarah Eastbell who spoke first—who turned at last to Lucy, and looked very curiously at her as she spoke.

“How you must hate him, Lucy!” she said.

“Hate whom?” asked Lucy, with a start.

“Poor Reuben.”

“Why do you think I hate him?” she inquired in a husky whisper.

“You think so meanly of him; there come to your mind such terrible suspicions,” Sarah said, shuddering; “any one who had ever cared for him, who had ever known him, as it seems to me, would have set him in a brighter light than you do. That I should give him up, because for all his life I should be a clog upon him, is good advice perhaps; but, Lucy, I should value it more highly if you respected this honest fellow more.”

“You—you reproach *me*!” cried Lucy indignantly.

“Why not? when you degrade one I love so much—when, in your aversion, you invent these awful charges against his honour and good name.”

“My aversion—my hate!” cried Lucy—“you fool of a girl, I loved him with all my soul before he ever saw you!”

## CHAPTER XI.

## A PASSING TEMPEST.

IT was a strong outburst of passion, that took the staid Miss Jennings out of herself, and transformed her into a jealous and excitable woman. Sarah Eastbell's accusation must have struck home, for the preacher to have given way in this fashion—to have owned that she was as weak and susceptible as the timid girl who shrank away from her. In all the dull, cold life of Lucy Jennings, and under every circumstance thereof, she had treasured up this secret until now; she had fought against her passion and its hopelessness, she had kept

strong, and rigid, and unswerving, till Sarah's accusation had overcome, suddenly and strangely, the self-command upon which she had ever prided her poor self. It was a virago rather than a woman who glared at Sarah, with gleaming eyes, and hands clenched menacingly. Well for Lucy Jennings was it that religion had taken a firm hold of her, and turned a strong will and a fierce nature into a channel of self-sacrifice and prayer, or she might have been swept away by the current which for ever surges round our humankind. Religion saved her. If she had not become a gentle and amiable woman, it had given her work to do, and set her in a sphere wherein she had become useful; and from this storm, even, much good might follow in due course, teaching her in after days the lesson of more humility and patience.

"You—you loved Reuben!" exclaimed Sarah in her first surprise.

"Ay, you may well glare," cried Lucy, who

was terribly roused now—"you may well turn pale at the madness that is in me. Yes, I loved him. What else on earth have I ever had to love in all my wretched life but that man? I would have died for him at any time, if he had asked me. I would have been his slave, and thanked God for my bondage. I have prayed to Heaven for one kind word from him—he has stood between me and Heaven very often."

"My poor Lucy!" said Sarah, in a soft, low whisper.

"Don't pity me—don't talk to me in that way!" cried Lucy, violently. "Did I ever pity you, or do anything but hate you for liking Reuben, and for Reuben's liking you? What are you but a child?—what should he have seen in you but a baby's face, a baby's heart, and a trick of being grateful?—why should he be a beggar all his life, because he asked you to marry him when his inheritance had been stolen from him by your grandmother? Do

you think I want consolation from you, of all the people in the world, who have vexed me nearly unto death?"

Sarah did not reply. This was a storm there was no quelling, she felt assured. It was the reaction after long years of self-repression, and must burn itself out. The face strangely convulsed, the fiery eyes, the figure swaying on the chair, the thin hands clenched together, were all witnesses to it.

"But he never knew of this—I would have killed myself with shame if he had ever guessed it—I could kill you now, if you were to tell him what your taunts have dragged out of my heart in this way," she raved on. "It was an agony to love him—there was no grain of comfort in it; if he had died, I should have been happier. I felt he despised me——"

"No, no!" cried Sarah at this juncture.

"That he laughed at me—that he tried at times to make me hate him—that my poor ways, my bad temper, my mean house, this

mean face with which I have been cursed," she cried, striking it passionately with her right hand, "were all matters for his jest, or his indifference. I was nothing to him—not for one minute of his life—and he to me was all I cared to live for. I gave him taunt for taunt at times; but—oh, my God!—you know how much I have loved him to this day!"

"And yet——" began Sarah.

"And yet I saw his faults—distrusted him—knew that there were in the world hundreds of better men—is that what you were going to say?" she asked fiercely.

"Hardly—but——"

"Don't ask me any questions—you see what a wretch I am—how cast down, and torn away from every thought that should give me peace, if I were what I try to be."

There was a low long wail, and a sudden and passionate rain of tears—an utter collapse to a grief which saved her, and made her woman-like and hysterical. Sarah let her weep



and sob, and made no effort to compose her—the younger woman felt that it was best to leave her thus, that the brain which had rocked strangely in the storm, would more quickly compose itself if she attempted no consolation. She stole from the room when Lucy was cowering in her chair, with her hands outspread before her eyes, and it was half an hour later when she returned to her side.

Lucy Jennings was reading her Bible, with her hands clutching her temples, her grey hair pushed back, and her elbows planted firmly on each side of the book which she studied.

“Are you going to sit up late to-night?” Sarah said gently.

“A little while longer,” was the slow reply.

“Are you well now?” she asked timidly.

“Yes,” Lucy answered.

“May I kiss you before I say good night?” said Sarah; “may I think that we are more like sisters now, Lucy?”

"You should despise me," she said humbly.

"No!" was the quick denial—"I think I understand you at last."

"And love me none the less, child?"

"Ah! no," said Sarah.

"We may be sisters soon then—perhaps, in adversity together, we may grow to like each other more," she added mournfully.

"Good night," said Sarah, kissing her.

"Good night. God bless you!" answered Lucy Jennings.

## CHAPTER XII.

## SARAH MAKES UP HER MIND AGAIN.

**I**T was the old position—and yet with a grave difference. It was the old line of argument cropping up afresh in Sarah Eastbell's mind, with no Reuben Culwick at hand to laugh down her logic—with Reuben Culwick's power to laugh it down, perhaps, wonderfully diminished.

She must give him up—she must not remain that weight upon his life, that clog upon his industry, which she had always thought she was, when her love was not bewildering her too much. Reuben loved her, she hoped still—she did not put faith in those strange suspicions

of Lucy Jennings which preceded a stranger confession—but Lucy was right in one thing: that she, Sarah Eastbell, could not add to the happiness of Reuben Culwick's life. She could only add to the expenses!—she could only keep him poor. If she stood apart now, perhaps he would marry Mary Holland, and be master of his father's house again, just as the father had wished from the first. She had no right to bind him to this long engagement, to shackle his energies, to keep him from “bettering” himself—now that she felt herself as poor—morally, if not legally as poor—as when he came in search of her to Potter's Court.

She was very silent all that Sunday—very patient, and thoughtful, and heart-sick, as a good woman resigned to the inevitable might be, knowing the mighty difference that her own sacrifice would make to every hour of her after life. She went with Lucy to the service under the railway arch, and strove hard to interest herself in Lucy's prayers and Lucy's sermon ;

but despite Lucy's being extra powerful, extra severe on her own particular failings—as Sarah saw at once—she could not follow the extempore devotions, or the rough eloquence of the speaker. It was a quiet morning at these Sunday services; those who came to pray were not disturbed by those who came to scoff; but the evening was boisterous and stormy, and made up for it. Lucy Jennings read the signs of it in the noisy crowd about the door, and compressed her lips and held her breath at the strong language which echoed from the street as she and Sarah approached, under the escort of two policemen, who were waiting for them.

“You are trembling—you are afraid,” said Lucy Jennings to her companion; “will you turn back now?”

“Why?”

“There will be but little religion there to-night,” said Lucy, “and you are not a strong woman.”

"I was not thinking of the crowd—or the service," answered Sarah.

"Of what, then?" was the sharp inquiry.

"Of all I shall say to Reuben presently. It's very wrong, I know, Lucy, but you must not blame me for thinking of him so much. I can't help it," she said, plaintively.

"This is not a time or season for——What are you going to say to Reuben, then?" she asked, suddenly.

"What would you say, Lucy, in my place—for his sake?"

"I don't know what I should say," she replied; "I am a terrible hypocrite—and despicably weak."

They passed under the arch, where the service commenced, and was interrupted—where the old uproar went on, and the police were tolerably busy for an hour and a half—and where, amidst all the difficulties in the way, Lucy Jennings preached and pounded at sin, and worked herself into a white heat, and was so

especially eloquent at last, that the crowd at the doors was silenced, if unconvinced ; and one tall man with a beard, who had recently arrived, and had kept guard, as it were, over the unruly, muttered to himself—

“ It is her mission, after all, perhaps.”

The service came to an end ; the stormy elements subsided ; men, women, and children went their various ways, and Lucy Jennings and Sarah Eastbell came out together, and confronted Reuben Culwick, who was waiting for them.

“ You have come back, then ?” cried Sarah, in her first delight at seeing him, in her new forgetfulness of all that she had resolved upon.

“ Yes—it was no use stopping longer in Worcester, Sarah. Well, Lucy ?”

“ Well ?” answered Lucy, in her old short tones.

“ I congratulate you on your sermon, but I wish the surroundings had been more orthodox,

and the congregation less quarrelsome; for some of these days——”

Lucy was gone. She had suddenly “doubled,” and disappeared down one of the dark turnings, and Sarah and Reuben were left looking at each other.

“There, I have offended her again!” cried Reuben; “she never will listen to a fellow, or hear a fellow out. Poor old girl! she would have led a husband—if she had ever caught one, Sarah—a very sensational kind of life. It’s no use waiting for her, I think.”

“No.”

“She will be home before us, I daresay—being well-up in the back-slums about here. Take my arm, little woman, while I tell you all the news.”

Sarah Eastbell took his arm and sighed. This might be for the last time that they would ever walk together thus, who could tell? She had made up her mind now, and the sooner the truth was told him the better. He



gave her the opportunity to speak at once, and her impulsiveness leaped towards it, indiscreetly, desperately.

“I saw Miss Holland this morning—I gave her the will—and, by Jove, you are as poor as old Job, girl!”

## CHAPTER XIII.

## JEALOUS AT LAST.

REUBEN CULWICK could afford to treat poverty as a jest still, unless this was histrionic display to deceive and comfort Sarah Eastbell. If the latter, it was a terrible failure, which surprised even himself when his second-cousin spoke.

“Yes, Reuben, I have been waiting for this poverty, to tell you that you must not share it with me.”

“Indeed!” was his quiet answer.

“That you and I are not fit for each other.

Oh, Reuben," she cried, "I am quite certain of it now!"

"Do you remember what I said on the day we first spoke of this down at Worcestershire?" Reuben inquired.

"Ah! every word."

"And yet not one word left to pin a second-cousin's faith to," he said lightly. "Well, let us go over the old argument again."

"No, no!" she said, shrinking from him; "you can't convince me that it is better for our foolish engagement to continue."

"Shall I tell you why?" said Reuben, looking down very intently into her face.

Sarah did not answer, and he continued, after a moment's pause—

"Because Lucy Jennings—charming Lucy!—has been at her old work, reckoning after her own style, fashioning out human lives after her own purposeless way, choosing for others a path ahead that no human being out of Bedlam could follow, doing everything for the best and

for one's good, but scattering dust and ashes right and left, like a violent Vesuvius. Come, is not Lucy Jennings at the bottom of this resolution?"

"I have been thinking of this for weeks. I have been seeing the necessity for it——"

"Ay, through Lucy's spectacles."

"You are hard on Lucy, Reuben."

"I say, God bless her for a well-meaning woman, Sarah," said Reuben; "but if she had a trifle more consideration—more heart, it would be better for us all. I have left you too long, and the position or the companionship has unnerved you. We must alter all this; there must be less work and more holiday-making. We will go to the pit of a theatre to-morrow, as a start-off, girl."

"You would lose money by coming to me," said Sarah mournfully.

"Nonsense. I have begun to save money again."

"Ah! Reuben, let us understand each other

at last; don't ask me to say anything, do anything, but end this unnatural position between us. I am unhappy."

"Because of this engagement?"

"Yes."

"You are afraid of poverty with me?"

"I am afraid of making you poorer than you are—of keeping you poor all your life," said Sarah.

"Yes, you have been over-dosed by the Jennings' powders. I know their effect, and should have been more considerate," said Reuben, caustically; "but then I had more faith in your courage."

More faith in her courage! She who had the courage to resign him—who gave up her one hope of happiness lest he should grow unhappy presently! But he could not see this, or he would not see it—Heaven only knew which.

"I——" she began, almost indignantly, when he stopped her.

"If this is to be our last meeting, or our last parting, Sarah," he said, quickly, "let it be marred by no harsh reminiscence. We are going to say good-bye. We have discovered that housekeeping expenses will shipwreck us; that I shall grow in good time a big brute, to whom no second-cousin's devotion will bring comfort. But we need not quarrel over the discovery. We can part friends?"

"Yes," answered Sarah—"the best of friends."

There was something in his manner that she hardly fathomed. She had been more prepared for an angry outburst, than for this easy-going style of acquiescence.

"It is hardly justice," he continued, "for you who would have married a poor man, will not let me marry a poor woman in my turn. You want all the self-sacrifice on one side, Sarah; and even my good luck with my pen is turned into a weapon against me. But," he added, "we will not quarrel. Never an angry word

between these two blundering relatives, who do not know their own minds."

"I know that——"

"No, Sarah, I am sure you don't," he said, interrupting her again ; "but we will not argue about it, and wound our feelings unnecessarily. We will spare each other between this and the York Road. We will wait till Miss Holland gives us her opinion on the matter."

"Miss Holland!" cried Sarah Eastbell.

"What do you mean?"

"Miss Holland is in the York Road apartments. She came from Worcester with me this afternoon."

"With you! You went to escort her, then?"

"No. I went to see her, to tell her the news of her prosperity, and to offer my congratulations, after which I said good morning."

"Well?" said Sarah, in a sharp, inquiring tone.

“Well, an hour or two afterwards she turned up at the railway station, and in common politeness I could but offer her my escort back to town. She was very anxious to see you, she said.”

“Ah! she said so,” answered his second-cousin. There was no further argument after the introduction of Mary Holland’s name into the conversation. The harmony of the last evening together was effectually settled after that. Better to have ended all in a storm of words and tears than in the grave and unnatural silence which followed. Sarah had no idea that she was a jealous woman until then, for Lucy had not made her jealous that night—only roused in her a feeling of intense indignation at the suspicions which she had sown broadcast. But for Reuben Culwick to speak of Mary Holland in this off-hand way was a very different matter; and her heart sank like a stone, and refused to stir any more with hope or pleasure, or even surprise.



When they were in the York Road, Reuben said—

“She is not in good spirits, but I hope Tots has been a companion for her whilst we have been away.”

“Is the child with her?”

“To be sure,” said Reuben; “is not Tots—but there, Mary will explain it all for herself.”

“Mary!” echoed Sarah Eastbell.

They went up-stairs into the front room on the first floor, where sat by the fireside the young woman whom we have known by the name of Mary Holland. Tots was in her lap, with her child’s arms round her neck, and her little head soothed upon a mother’s bosom, for the first time in her childish recollections.

“It is her child, then!” said Sarah in a low whisper.

“Yes, to be sure,” answered Reuben carelessly.

"I am in a dream," murmured Sarah.

"But you are very close to the waking,"  
added her cousin Reuben.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## CONFIDENCE.

THERE was another inmate of the room which Reuben and his cousin had entered. Lucy Jennings was standing on the hearthrug with her hands clasped together, and her grave white face turned towards mother and child. Reuben was right. She had reached home before them, having a better knowledge of the shortest cut to York Road than Reuben had.

Mary looked round as the cousins came in together, and a sad smile flickered on a face grown careworn with anxiety. She did not raise her head from that of her child's as Reuben and Sarah advanced, and Reuben said—

"Mrs. Peterson, I have brought an old friend to shake hands with you—to express her regrets for all that past distrust which she has had, as well as I."

Sarah had only heard the first two words.

"Mrs. Peterson!" she exclaimed. "Then you—you——"

"I was Edward Peterson's wife," she added, wearily and sadly—"yes."

"But not in the plot against you, Sarah," said Reuben; "fighting for you in the first instance—writing to me to come to the rescue—kept for ever in doubt concerning you—held down at last to silence by the awful threat of her child's death—believing in your safety through it all, and striving once more for you and against her husband, when she feared his treachery had deceived her."

"And he was true to his word," Mary added, with a sigh, "for the first time in his life."

Sarah looked from Reuben to the companion and friend, and said,

"I do not see how Edward Peterson——"

"It is a long story," said Mary, interrupting her; "spare me for a few days the history of a schoolgirl's secret marriage, a bitter repentance, a husband's desertion, a long up-hill fight to forget a past that had become terrible and full of humiliation. I did not know then that Bessie lived" (clasping the child more tightly in her arms), "and was one link of love that held me to my old life."

She showered a hundred kisses on the child, who cowered at this passionate demonstration of affection, and at the sudden outburst of tears which followed it. Children cannot love even their mothers at first sight; and poor Tots, tossed from one heart to the other through life, sprang from Mary's lap and ran into Reuben's arms as a safer shelter for her.

"She will soon grow used to you," said Lucy Jennings in a low voice. "You are too eager for the child's affection."

"She will soon love me too, I hope. Mr. Cul-

wick," she said, turning to Reuben and passing her hand across her eyes. "I shall be a formidable rival to you presently, and, remembering all past kindness, past sacrifices of which Miss Jennings has told me, I shall be never jealous of you."

"I told you not to say anything about it," muttered Lucy Jennings.

"What have you been singing to my praises, Lucy?" cried Reuben.

"I never praise anybody," answered Lucy.

Sarah meanwhile had crossed to Mary Peterson at last, and sat down by her side, and taken her by both hands.

"Yours has been a strange life, and I have judged you wrongly in it," she said. "If only for a little while, still it was a great wrong."

"How do you know?" asked Mary.

"Reuben says so, and——"

"And you believe in Reuben—as you always will."

Sarah Eastbell felt herself blushing, but she did not hazard a reply.

"I have come to London for a few words of explanation, Sarah; they are made at a sad time," Mary said, "but I could not rest, after Reuben's visit to me—not even for an hour after my husband's death."

"Edward Peterson is dead!" exclaimed Sarah Eastbell.

She was surprised—she hardly knew why, but she was sorry for his death. He had plotted against her—he would have killed her rather than let her escape without a ransom—but she did not begrudge him his life. And it left Mary a young and pretty widow too—but what had that to do with it?

"He died within an hour of your cousin's visit this morning," said Mary.

"And you are here!" replied Sarah, wonderingly.

"Ah! you cannot understand that," said Mary—"you, who will love your husband all

your life. But my love was crushed out quickly, and only my duty took me to his bedside—my regret for the last mistake which brought about his death, and his last act of vengeance.”

“His last act of vengeance!” repeated Sarah.

“Half an hour after Mr. Culwick had left me, my husband changed suddenly; he realised, for the first time, that there was no hope for him in this world, and—what did he do?” she added, with a shudder.

“He should have asked pardon of you for blighting your life,” said Sarah.

“He should have sought pardon of his God,” added Lucy Jennings.

“He tore the last will of Simon Culwick into a hundred pieces, lest I should claim my right to riches by it,” answered Mary; “he cursed me, and left me poor.”

“But——”

“But I have all the fragments,” added Mary,



opening a purse heaped to the clasp with small pieces of paper ; “ see—there they are.”

Sarah glanced at them, but did not speak.

“ It would be a specimen of patch-work that the law would hardly acknowledge,” said the widow ; “ but you would not dispute the will, Sarah, if I, by patient study and great care, render this testament complete again ?”

“ No,” answered Sarah Eastbell.

“ In my husband’s life-time I dared not make him rich ; and now, in memory of much kindness, of old trust—of new confidence, may I say ?—I have the courage to remain poor.”

She held the open purse over the fire, and the fragments fell from it into the red coals. Both Reuben and Sarah started forwards to arrest her hand, but it was too late.

“ You should not have done this,” cried Reuben.

“ It was not a just will,” answered the widow ; “ I told your father so when he placed it in my hands, although I did not tell him that never in

all my life should I avail myself of his munificence."

"He had wronged your father in some manner which we cannot guess at—but which he owned himself. You told me that," said Reuben.

"He was strange that day. It might have been the raving of a madman."

"As that," said Lucy, pointing to the fire, "was the act of a madwoman."

"I think not," answered Mary, confidently; "it is an act of justice to the man entitled to his father's money, and who will marry this brave young lady in possession."

"She has given me up," said Reuben drily, but Mary turned from one to another and read no doubt or distress on either face. Here were two lives in the sunshine at last.

"I believe it was always Simon Culwick's wish that Reuben should have this money," continued Mary; "he did not know of my marriage, and I dared not tell him for my

home's sake, and so we went on from one complication to another. There were only two wills," said Mary; "the first left all to his sister, the second to me—and the second I could not, and I did not care to, prove. The answer to the riddle came round in the way I thought it might do, if I were watchful and reserved—for I knew in what high estimation Sarah Eastbell held her cousin, and how she had made up her mind—quite made it up—to give an obstinate man his rights. She and I together planned more ways than one—she very artless, I very artful, perhaps—but the best, and simplest, and happiest way has come without our plotting."

"But you?" said Sarah and Reuben together.

"You two are not likely to forget me, or my little daughter here—to shut me from your friendship—to help me in the world should I want help."

"Help!" echoed Reuben; "why, it is all yours."

"You can't prove that," said Mary emphatically, "and I would prefer to be dependent on your bounty. I will not be too proud to ask for a pension, when my little girl grows up and tires of her mother."

"The future, for you and Tots, you will leave to Sarah and me," said Reuben; "you will trust in those whom you have trusted so much already."

"As they will trust in me now," said the unselfish woman, holding out her hands to them.

It is a fair picture on which the curtain is rung down—on perfect confidence, and true affection, and prosperity—on life opening out before these three, with no shadows on the scene beyond. Reuben and Sarah will live happily for ever afterwards—as young couples always should in books—and Mary and her daughter will be their faithful friends and loving companions to the end of life.

In the red glow of the sunset of our story,

stands poor Lucy Jennings—grave and stony as the Libyan sphinx—commenting but little upon the happiness about her, and yet feeling that it reaches to her heart, and makes her more like other women. She does not own this, but as years steal on, she will become wiser and kinder, and more considerate—be not above the vanity of a visit to Sedge Hill, and work as hard and successfully to reform her brother John, as she has done in old days to reform the mysterious lives of society's offshoots. She will have given up preaching under railway arches then, and be a white-haired woman, whom Reuben will be kind and courteous to, and Reuben's children will love, although they will run away and hide when she preaches too long sermons to them—a weakness that will never wholly leave her, even when asthma turns up.

Reuben's brother-in-law, one Thomas Eastbell, will not visit Worcestershire again, and Reuben's wife will not learn for years of his

disappearance in the Australian bush—where we can afford to let the last of our villains hide himself.

In the bright early morning, gazing from the window of her room at the fair landscape beyond, with the silvery laughter of little children ringing upwards from the lawn, and with her husband's arm linked within her own, Second-cousin Sarah will talk no longer of Sedge Hill being an unlucky house.

THE END.



13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

# MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S

## LIST OF NEW WORKS.

---

### LIFE OF THE RT. HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL ;

Including His Correspondence with Numerous Distinguished Persons. By His Grandson, SPENCER WALPOLE. 2 vols. 8vo, with Portrait. 30s.

This work contains Letters from the King, the Prince Regent, the Dukes of Cumberland, Wellington, Portland, Richmond; Lords Liverpool, Grenville, Grey, Loughborough, Spencer, Wellesley, Lonsdale, Castlereagh; Mr. Pitt, Mr. Addington, Mr. Canning, and other distinguished men.

---

"Mr. Walpole's work reflects credit not only on his industry in compiling an important biography from authentic material, but also on his eloquence, power of interpreting political change, and general literary address. This biography will at once take rank in our political literature, both as a faithful reflection of the statesman and his period, as also for its philosophic, logical, and dramatic completeness."—*Morning Post*.

"In Mr. Perceval's biography his grandson has undoubtedly made a valuable addition to our Parliamentary history. The book is full of interest."—*Daily News*.

"We have to thank Mr. Walpole for a very valuable and interesting biography, and for doing justice to the memory of one who has too long been without it."—*Standard*.

"Mr. Walpole has added a contribution of novel interest and importance to our political history. His volumes are a creditable monument of laborious industry and impartial research."—*The Hour*.

"This book shows creditable industry and a moderate impartial tone. It will have a favourable effect for Perceval's reputation, bringing out as it does in strong relief his Parliamentary abilities and exemplary character."—*Athenaeum*.

"As a contribution to political and Parliamentary history Mr. Spencer Walpole's work possesses considerable value."—*Saturday Review*.

"We have been extremely interested in Mr. Spencer Walpole's book, and he undoubtedly deserves the credit of having added no little to our knowledge of the character of and the springs of action in the times of which he writes. As a Life of Perceval, written by his grandson, the work is as valuable as it could be expected to be. As a contribution to history, we are justified in according to it no inconsiderable praise."—*Examiner*.

### VOLS. III. & IV. OF THE HISTORY OF TWO

QUEENS: CATHARINE OF ARAGON and ANNE BOLEYN.

By W. HERFORTH DIXON. Demy 8vo. Price 30s. Completing the Work.

### SPAIN AND THE SPANIARDS. By AZAMAT

BATUK. 2 vols. crown 8vo. 21s. (*In Feb.*)

### REMINISCENCES OF A SOLDIER. By COL.

W. R. STUART, C.B. 2 vols. crown 8vo. 21s. (*In the Press.*)

### THROUGH RUSSIA: FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO

ASTRAKHAN AND THE CRIMEA. By MRS. GUTHRIE. 2 vols. crown 8vo, with Illustrations. 21s. (*In the Press.*)



## MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

**LIFE OF MOSCHELES; WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS DIARIES AND CORRESPONDENCE.** By HIS WIFE. Adapted from the German by ARTHUR DUKE COLKRIDGE. 2 vols. large post 8vo, with Portrait. 24s.

"This life of Moscheles will be a valuable book of reference for the musical historian, for the contents extend over a period of threescore years, commencing with 1794, and ending at 1870. We need scarcely state that all the portions of Moscheles' diary which refer to his intercourse with Beethoven, Hummel, Weber, Czerny, Spontini, Rossini, Auber, Halévy, Schumann, Cherubini, Spohr, Mendelssohn, F. David, Chopin, J. B. Cramer, Clementi, John Field, Habeneck, Hauptmann, Kalkbrenner, Kiewewetter, C. Klingemann, Lablache, Dragonetti, Sontag, Persiani, Malibran, Paganini, Rachel, Ronzi de Begnis, De Beriot, Ernst, Donzelli, Cinti-Damoreau, Chelard, Bochsa, Laporte, Charles Kemble, Paton (Mrs. Wood), Schröder-Devrient, Mrs. Siddons, Sir H. Bishop, Sir G. Smart, Standigl, Thalberg, Berlioz, Velluti, C. Young, Balfe, Braham, and many other artists of note in their time, will recall a flood of recollections. It was a delicate task for Madame Moscheles to select from the diaries in reference to living persons, but her extracts have been judiciously made. Moscheles writes fairly of what is called the 'Music of the Future' and its disciples, and his judgments on Herr Wagner, Dr. Liszt, Rubenstein, Dr. von Bülow, Litolff, &c., whether as composers or executants, are in a liberal spirit. He recognizes cheerfully the talents of our native artists, Sir Sterndale Bennett, Mr. Macfarren, Madame Arabella Goddard, Mr. John Barnett, Mr. Hullah, Mrs. Shaw, Mr. A. Sullivan, &c. The celebrities with whom Moscheles came in contact, include Sir Walter Scott, Sir Robert Peel, the late Duke of Cambridge, the Bunsens, Louis Philippe, Napoleon the Third, Humboldt, Henry Heine, Thomas More, Count Nesselrode, the Duchess of Orleans, Prof. Wolf, &c. Indeed, the two volumes are full of amusing anecdotes."—*Athenæum*.

"The publication of these memoirs will give satisfaction to many of our readers. The devotees of music in this country are both numerous and earnest. By this class these volumes will be hailed with particular delight; but they will be acceptable also to a far wider circle—to all who enjoy a sonata at home or a symphony in the concert-room. The scope of the work gives it this popular interest, apart from the technical value it possesses. It is as well 'a record of the life of Moscheles' as 'a chronicle of the musical history of his time'—a period of sixty years."—*Times*.

"This work is full of interesting information and pleasant gossip about the musical events of the last half-century. Moscheles kept up to the day of his death a diary, in which he recorded all his experiences, and his constant intercourse with such men as Beethoven, Weber, Mendelssohn, and Schumann, enabled him to collect a mass of facts and anecdotes which throw much valuable light on recent musical history. The greater part of the diary was written in London, where Moscheles settled in 1826; and he describes in a vivid and attractive style the various incidents of his career in England, and the events which most interested our musical public during that time. Of all Moscheles' recollections none are so interesting as those of Mendelssohn."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

**CRISS-CROSS JOURNEYS.** By WALTER THORNBURY. 2 vols. crown 8vo. 21s.

"A capital book."—*John Bull*.

"A lively, graphic, and interesting book."—*Daily News*.

"An interesting book. Very pleasant companions are Mr. Thornbury's two volumes of travel, revealing as they do glimpses of the oldest and newest world, enlivened with countless anecdotes and many personal adventures. The reader will find Mr. Thornbury a fascinating raconteur."—*Graphic*.

"Mr. Thornbury is a shrewd and observant traveller. His descriptions are singularly life-like and truthful, and his humour is genuine. His journeys are excellent. His descriptions of America are both truthful and valuable, and what he has to say about Egypt and Russia, though less important, is worth saying and well said."—*Sunday Times*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S  
NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

HISTORY OF TWO QUEENS: CATHARINE  
OF ARAGON and ANNE BOLEYN. By W. HEPWORTH DIXON.  
*Second Edition.* Vols. 1 & 2. Demy 8vo. 30s. Vols. 3 & 4, com-  
pleting the Work, are also now ready.

"In two handsome volumes Mr. Dixon here gives us the first instalment of a new historical work on a most attractive subject. The book is in many respects a favourable specimen of Mr. Dixon's powers. It is the most painstaking and elaborate that he has yet written. . . . On the whole, we may say that the book is one which will sustain the reputation of its author as a writer of great power and versatility, that it gives a new aspect to many an old subject, and presents in a very striking light some of the most recent discoveries in English history."—*Athenæum*.

"In these volumes the author exhibits in a signal manner his special powers and finest endowments. It is obvious that the historian has been at especial pains to justify his reputation, to strengthen his hold upon the learned, and also to extend his sway over the many who prize an attractive style and interesting narrative more highly than laborious research and philosophic insight."—*Morning Post*.

"The thanks of all students of English history are due to Mr. Hepworth Dixon for his clever and original work, 'History of two Queens.' As yet we have only an instalment; but there is enough in these volumes to show how excellently qualified is Mr. Dixon for the task he has undertaken. The book is a valuable contribution to English history. The author has consulted a number of perfectly original sources of information—in particular the archives at Simancas, Alcala, and Venice. Mr. Dixon is a skilful writer. His style, singularly vivid, graphic, and dramatic—is alive with human and artistic interest. Some of the incidental descriptions reach a very high level of picturesque power."—*Daily News*.

"Mr. Hepworth Dixon, in his new work, has chosen a theme at once intrinsically interesting and admirably fit for illustration by his practised and brilliant pen. The lives of Catharine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn give ample scope to a writer so clear and vivid in his descriptions, so lifelike in his portraiture, so decided in his judgment, and whose sparkling vivacity of style can be shaded off, when necessary, by such delicate touches of tenderness and pathos. For pleasant reading and very effective writing we can warmly commend Mr. Dixon's volumes."—*Daily Telegraph*.

"Two fascinating volumes. It is a work of careful criticism and conscientious investigation."—*Standard*.

"In these volumes we have much graphic vivacity and picturesque charm in the style, and abundant evidence of accurate research. If Mr. Dixon displays in what yet remains of his task the same amount of discrimination, careful writing, and patient research, he will have made another valuable contribution to our national history."—*The Hour*.

"The history of Catharine of Aragon is one of the highest interest. The vicissitudes of her career afford a fitting field for the exercise of Mr. Dixon's remarkable talent in describing past scenes with a freshness and vigour which neutralize the mist of years, and of infusing life and passion into the monumental effigies of the remarkable men and women of the past. To study Mr. Dixon's account of the country, of the Court, and of the family history of Isabel the Catholic, is to possess the key to the explanation of all the anarchy and misery through which Spain is now struggling."—*Echo*.

"A brilliant instalment towards a complete history. If Mr. Dixon accomplishes his task with the pains and industry which mark every page of the volumes now before us, the public will acknowledge his 'Queens' as the most successful of all his labours."—*Notes and Queries*.

"A thoughtful, impressive, and philosophical work, valuable alike for breadth of view, extent of information, and penetrative insight; and it has, like all its author's works, the glow and fascination of romance. No reader will leave a page unperused."—*Sunday Times*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

## MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

### RECOLLECTIONS OF SOCIETY IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND. By LADY CLEMENTINA DAVIES. *Second Edition.* 2 vols. 21s.

Among numerous other distinguished persons referred to in this work are :—Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, Louis XVIII, the Duchesse D'Angouleme, Napoleon I, the Empress Josephine, Queen Hortense, Charles X, Louis Philippe, the Duke and Duchess de Berry, the Count de Chambord, the Emperor Alexander, King Frederic William, Prince Talleyrand, Prince Esterhazy, Blucher, Ney, Soult, Fouché, the Polignacs, Talma, Napoleon III, the Empress Eugenie, the Duc de Morny, Count d'Orsay, Victor Hugo, George IV, Queen Caroline, Prince Leopold, the Princess Charlotte, the Duke of York, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Sir H. Davy, Tom Moore, Mr. Barham, Mrs. Siddons, the Kembles, Mrs. Jordan, Miss Stephens, Mlle. Mars, Madame Catalani, Mlle. Rachel, the Countess Guiccioli, Lady Cork, Lady Blessington, &c.

"On proceeding to a conscientious examination of the contents, we found the familiar and commonplace matter lightened and relieved by many lively touches of description, many traits of character, many illustrative incidents, which may prove helps to history, and might have been irretrievably lost had they not been marked and recorded as they occurred. Lady Clementina Davies's opportunities were excellent, and the very traditions of her family are fraught with interest. Some of her local and personal impressions are as graphic and distinct as if they had been—so to speak—photographed on her memory."—*The Times*.

"Two charming volumes, full of the most interesting and entertaining matter, and written in plain, elegant English. Lady Clementina Davies has seen much, heard much, and remembered well. Her unique and brilliant recollections have the interest of a romance, wherein no character is fictitious, no incident untrue."—*Post*.

### FROM THE THAMES TO THE TAMAR: A SUMMER ON THE SOUTH COAST. By the Rev. A. G. L'ESTRANGE. *Second Edition.* 8vo, with Illustrations. 15s.

"Mr. L'Estrange's pages have not the least flavour of the guide-book; they are pleasant and interesting chapters of local history, relieved by clear and unaffected descriptions of scenery, plainly written, yet picturesque and sufficient."—*Times*.

"To all who visit the south coast this book will afford much useful and interesting information."—*Standard*.

"An interesting book, full of historical and local information."—*Examiner*.

### TO AND FROM CONSTANTINOPLE. By HUBERT E. H. JERNINGHAM. 8vo, with Illustrations. 15s.

"Mr. Jerningham has filled a very agreeable volume with the tale of his excursions during the last three years among scenes of classic or Oriental interest. His style is lively, clear, and picturesque."—*Saturday Review*.

"Mr. Jerningham's work includes trips from Brindisi to Athens, to Corinth by Nauplia, and Mycenæ, to Mount Athos, to Cyzicus, Broussa, Nicomedia, and Nicæa, besides chapters upon Constantinople and its environs. While the most interesting parts of the work to a general reader are the descriptions of the people, the author gives a mass of notices as to the antiquities and interesting sites of the localities he visits."—*Standard*.

### ADVENTURES AFLOAT AND ASHORE. By PARKER GILLMORE ("Ubique"). 2 vols., with Illustrations. 21s.

"Written in bright and lively style."—*Athenæum*.

"An inimitable repertory of anecdotes, fun, and frolic."—*John Bull*.

"Two lively, rattling volumes of racy anecdote, giving a charming idea of sport by land and sea."—*Graphic*.

"Two readable volumes, which become at times really exciting."—*Standard*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

## MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

### THE SWITZERS. By W. HEPWORTH DIXON.

*Third Edition.* 1 vol. demy 8vo. 15s.

"Turn where we will there is the same impassioned eloquence, the same lavish wealth of metaphor, the same vigour of declamation, the same general glow upon the pages. Switzerland may be hackneyed as a country, yet there is freshness in Mr. Dixon's subjects. Mr. Dixon throws a passing glance at the snow peaks and glacier fields that are the Switzerland of the tourist. If he deals with the grand catastrophes of nature, with avalanche, flood, and storm, it is in their relation to the victims of the elements, for his topics are the people and their institutions. We assent entirely to the parable of his preface."—*Times*.

"A lively, interesting, and altogether novel book on Switzerland. It is full of valuable information on social, political, and ecclesiastical questions, and, like all Mr. Dixon's books, it is eminently readable."—*Daily News*.

"We advise every one who cares for good literature to get a copy of this brilliant, novel, and abundantly instructive account of the Switzers. The composition of the book is in the very best style."—*Morning Post*.

"A work of real and abiding value. Mr. Dixon has never painted with more force and truth. His descriptions are accurate, impartial, and clear. We most cordially recommend the book."—*Standard*.

### MY RECOLLECTIONS, FROM 1806 to 1873.

By LORD WILLIAM PITT LENNOX. 2 vols. 8vo. 30s.

These volumes contain anecdotes and reminiscences of George IV., William IV. Louis XVIII, Prince Leopold, the Prince Consort, Prince Talleyrand, Napoleon III, the Empress Eugénie, the Prince Imperial, the Duke of Wellington, the Marquess of Anglesea, Lords Byron, Chesterfield, Brougham, Normanby, G. Bentinck, Dalling; Messrs. Pitt, Moore, Rogers, Hook, Barham, Dickens, Thackeray, Keon, Matthews, Young, Talma, Mdle. Mars, Madame Mallbran, &c.

"Lord William Lennox's book is a very good specimen of the class to which it belongs. In one way or another he has seen a great deal, and he records his experiences so as to amuse and interest his readers."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

"It is impossible to find a more efficient chronicler of men and manners than the writer of these fascinating pages."—*John Bull*.

"A most entertaining work. The author numbered among his friends and acquaintance all ranks of society—sovereigns, peers, statesmen, authors, wits, actors, and military men. He gives us some most delightful anecdotes and reminiscences."—*Court Journal*.

"A delightful book—one of the pleasantest and most amusing the reader can hope to peruse."—*Sunday Times*.

### THE LION AND THE ELEPHANT. By the

late C. J. ANDERSSON, Author of "Lake Ngami," &c. Edited by  
L. LLOYD, author of "Field Sports of the North," &c. 8vo.  
With Illustrations. 15s.

"This handsome volume contains a most graphic account of the adventures of Mr. Andersson, from papers which he left behind him, and which have been most ably edited by Mr. Lloyd. The favourite pursuit of the deceased traveller was the chase of the lion, and he gives us most minute particulars of the habits and customs of the royal beast. The portion of the work anent elephants is of equal interest. All fond of tales of adventure and daring should procure this capital book."—*John Bull*.

"This book is pleasant reading. It gives much valuable information, and many excellent stories about these interesting animals."—*Examiner*.

"Interesting to the general reader, this attractive book will be found especially worthy of the attention of naturalists and sportsmen."—*Standard*.

"An attractive and exciting volume, full of adventures and hair-breadth escapes and which will be read with interest and delight."—*Graphic*.

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET

## MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

### VOLS. I. & II. OF HER MAJESTY'S TOWER.

By W. HEPWORTH DIXON. DEDICATED BY EXPRESS  
PERMISSION TO THE QUEEN. *Sixth Edition.* 8vo. 30s.

CONTENTS:—The Pile—Inner Ward and Outer Ward—The Wharf—River Rights—The White Tower—Charles of Orleans—Uncle Gloucester—Prison Rules—Beauchamp Tower—The good Lord Cobham—King and Cardinal—The Pilgrimage of Grace—Madge Cheyne—Heirs to the Crown—The Nine Days' Queen—De-throned—The Men of Kent—Courtney—No Cross no Crown—Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley—White Roses—Princess Margaret—Plot and Counterplot—Monsieur Charles—Bishop of Ross—Murder of Northumberland—Philip the Confessor—Maas in the Tower—Sir Walter Raleigh—The Arabella Plot—Raleigh's Walk—The Villain Waad—The Garden House—The Brick Tower—The Anglo-Spanish Plot—Factions at Court—Lord Grey of Wilton—Old English Catholics—The English Jesuits—White Webbs—The Priests' Plot—Wilton Court—Last of a Noble Line—Powder-Plot Room—Guy Fawkes—Origin of the Plot—Vinegar House—Conspiracy at Large—The Jesuit's Move—In London—November, 1605—Hunted Down—In the Tower—Search for Garnet—End of the English Jesuits—The Catholic Lords—Harry Percy—The Wizard Earl—A Real Arabella Plot—William Seymour—The Escape—Pursuit—Dead in the Tower—Lady Frances Howard—Robert Carr—Powder Poisoning

FROM THE TIMES:—"All the civilized world—English, Continental, and American—takes an interest in the Tower of London. The Tower is the stage upon which has been enacted some of the grandest dramas and saddest tragedies in our national annals. If, in imagination, we take our stand on those time-worn walls, and let century after century flit past us, we shall see in due succession the majority of the most famous men and lovely women of England in the olden time. We shall see them jesting, jousting, love-making, plotting, and then anon, perhaps, commending their souls to God in the presence of a hideous masked figure, bearing an axe in his hands. It is such pictures as these that Mr. Dixon, with considerable skill as an historical limner, has set before us in these volumes. Mr. Dixon dashes off the scenes of Tower history with great spirit. His descriptions are given with such terseness and vigour that we should spoil them by any attempt at condensation. As favourable examples of his narrative powers we may call attention to the story of the beautiful but unpopular Ellnor, Queen of Henry III., and the description of Anne Boleyn's first and second arrivals at the Tower. Then we have the story of the bold Bishop of Durham, who escapes by the aid of a cord hidden in a wine-jar; and the tale of Maud Fitzwalter, imprisoned and murdered by the caitiff John. Passing onwards, we meet Charles of Orleans, the poetic French Prince, captured at Agincourt, and detained for five-and-twenty years a prisoner in the Tower. Next we encounter the baleful form of Richard of Gloucester, and are filled with indignation at the blackest of the black Tower deeds. As we draw nearer to modern times, we have the sorrowful story of the Nine Days' Queen, poor little Lady Jane Grey. The chapter entitled "No Cross, no Crown" is one of the most affecting in the book. A mature man can scarcely read it without feeling the tears ready to trickle from his eyes. No part of the first volume Raleigh. The greater part of the second volume is occupied with the story of the Another *cause célèbre* possessed of a perennial interest, is the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury by Lord and Lady Somerset. Mr. Dixon tells the tale skilfully. In conclusion, we may congratulate the author on this work. Both volumes are decidedly attractive, and throw much light on our national history."

"From first to last this work overflows with new information and original thought, with poetry and picture. In these fascinating pages Mr. Dixon discharges alternately the functions of the historian, and the historic biographer, with the insight, art, humour and accurate knowledge which never fail him when he undertakes to illumine the darksome recesses of our national story."

"We earnestly recommend this remarkable work to those in quest of amusement and instruction, at once solid and refined."—*Daily Telegraph.*

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S  
NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

VOLS. III. & IV. OF HER MAJESTY'S TOWER.

By W. HEPWORTH DIXON. DEDICATED BY EXPRESS  
PERMISSION TO THE QUEEN. Completing the Work. *Third  
Edition.* Demy 8vo. 30s.

CONTENTS:—A Favourite; A Favourite's Friend; The Countess of Suffolk; To the Tower; Lady Catherine Manners; House of Villiers; Revolution; Fall of Lord Bacon; A Spanish Match; Spaniolizing; Henry De Vere; The Matter of Holland; Sea Affairs; The Pirate War; Port and Court; A New Romanzo; Move and Counter-move; Pirate and Prison; In the Marshalsea; The Spanish Olive; Prisons Opened; A Parliament; Digby, Earl of Bristol; Turn of Fortune; Elliot Eloquent; Felton's Knife; An Assassin; Nine Gentlemen in the Tower; A King's Revenge; Charles I.; Pillars of State and Church; End of Wentworth; Laud's Last Troubles; The Lieutenant's House; A Political Romance; Philosophy at Bay; Fate of an Idealist; Britannia; Killing not Murder; A Second Buckingham; Roger, Earl of Castlemaine; A Life of Plots; The Two Penns; A Quaker's Cell; Colonel Blood; Crown Jewels, King and Colonel; Bye House Plot; Murder; A Patriot; The Good Old Cause; James, Duke of Monmouth; The Unjust Judge; The Scottish Lords; The Countess of Nithsdale; Escaped, Cause of the Pretender; Reformers and Reform, Reform Riots; Sir Francis Burdett; A Summons to the Tower; Arthur Thistlewood; A Cabinet Council; Cato Street; Pursuit; Last Prisoners in the Tower.

"Mr. Dixon's lively and accurate work."—*Times.*

"This book is thoroughly entertaining, well-written, and instructive."—*Examiner.*

"These volumes will place Mr. Dixon permanently on the roll of English authors who have rendered their country a service, by his putting on record a truthful and brilliant account of that most popular and instructive relic of antiquity. 'Her Majesty's Tower,' the annals of which, as related in these volumes, are by turns exciting and amusing, while they never fail to interest. Our ancient stronghold could have had no better historian than Mr. Dixon."—*Post.*

"By his merits of literary execution, his vivacious portrayments of historical figures, his masterly powers of narrative and description, and the force and graceful ease of his style, Mr. Dixon will keep his hold upon a multitude of readers."—*Illustrated News.*

"These volumes are two galleries of richly painted portraits of the noblest men and most brilliant women, besides others commemorated by English history. The grand old Royal Keep, palace and prison by turns, is revivified in these volumes, which close the narrative, extending from the era of Sir John Elliot, who saw Raleigh die in Palace Yard, to that of Thistlewood, the last prisoner immured in the Tower. Few works are given to us, in these days, so abundant in originality and research as Mr. Dixon's."—*Standard.*

HISTORY OF WILLIAM PENN, Founder of

Pennsylvania. By W. HEPWORTH DIXON. A NEW LIBRARY EDITION.  
1 vol. demy 8vo, with Portrait. 12s.

"Mr. Dixon's 'William Penn' is, perhaps, the best of his books. He has now revised and issued it with the addition of much fresh matter. It is now offered in a sumptuous volume, matching with Mr. Dixon's recent books, to a new generation of readers, who will thank Mr. Dixon for his interesting and instructive memoir of one of the worthies of England."—*Examiner.*

"'William Penn' is a fine and noble work. Eloquent, picturesque, and epigrammatic in style, subtle and philosophical in insight, and moderate and accurate in statement, it is a model of what a biography ought to be."—*Sunday Times.*

"The character of this great Christian Englishman, William Penn, a true hero of moral and civil conquests, is one of the fairest in modern history, and may be studied with profit by his countrymen of all ages. This biography of him now finally put into shape as a standard work of its kind, is Mr. Dixon's most useful production. Few books have a more genial and wholesome interest, or convey more beneficial instruction."—*Illustrated News.*

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

## MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

**BRIDES AND BRIDALS.** By J. C. JEAFFRESON,  
B.A., Oxon. *Second Edition.* 2 vols. 8vo. 30s.

**CONTENTS:**—Antiquity of Matrimonial Customs, Marriage by Capture, Marriage by Purchase, The Church Porch, Espousals, Celebration of Marriage, Publication of Banns, Ancient Restraints on Freedom of Marriage, Pre-Contracts, Marriages in Strict Order and Marriages by License, The Wedding Ring, The Ring-finger, The Gimmel Ring, Costumes of Brides, Bridesmaids, and Groomsmen, Wedding Cake, Wedding Presents, The Dinner and the Dance, Sports and Pastimes, Bridal Music, Wedding Sermons, Infantile Wedlock, Lucky Days and Lawful Hours, Parental Authority, Discipline of Wives, Laws and Novels, Sermons and Essays, Old Proverbs about Marriage and Women, Characteristics of Womanhood in Old Time, The Spinsters of Past Times, Medical Women and White Slaves, Clerical Marriage, Lay-marriages during the Commonwealth, Taxes on Celibacy, Curious Marriages, Clandestine and Irregular Marriages, Prisons and Lawless Churches, Fleet Marriages, The Fleet Clergy, Lord Hardwick's Marriage Act, The Navy Chapel, Greta Green Matches, The Carrying away of Heiresses, The Royal Fleet Marriages, The Royal Marriage Act, Marriage with Deceased Wife's Sister, Honeymoon Trips and Cards, Samuel Johnson on Matrimony, Jeux d'Esprit against Wives, Dissolution of Partnership, &c.

"In this book Mr. Jeaffreson appeals to an audience even larger than those addressed in his books about Lawyers, Doctors, and the Clergy. His 'Brides and Bridals' cannot fail to go straight to the heart of every woman in England. We doubt not that these volumes will be carefully scanned by fair eyes of all ages and conditions, and will afford no less amusement than instruction."—*Athenæum*.

**THE LUSHAI EXPEDITION. 1871-72.** By R.  
G. WOODTHORPE, Lieut. R.E. 1 vol. demy 8vo, with Illustrations. 15s.

"Lieut. Woodthorpe's account of the Lushai Expedition is important as well as interesting. The writer excels in description, and is very pleasing in his geographical and scenic sketches."—*Post*.

"Lieut. Woodthorpe has rendered an important service to the British public by giving them a most valuable and intelligible narrative of the Lushai Expedition. Those who take an interest in Indian affairs cannot do better than consult this interesting book."—*United Service Gazette*.

**THE LITERARY LIFE OF THE REV. WILLIAM HARNESSE,** Vicar of All Saints, Knightsbridge, and Prebendary of St. Paul's. By the Rev. A. G. L'ESTRANGE. 8vo. 15s.

"The book is a pleasant book, and will be found excellent reading. All those to whom the good name of Byron is dear, will read with an almost exquisite pleasure the testimony given by Harnesse. The fine qualities of the man are set forth, without any attempt to conceal his errors or his vices; as regards the latter, there is shown to have been gross exaggeration in the report of them."—*Athenæum*.

**LIFE AND LETTERS OF WILLIAM BEWICK,**  
**THE ARTIST.** Ed. by THOMAS LANDSEER, A.R.A. 2 v. Portrait.

"Bewick's fellow pupil and old friend, Mr. T. Landseer, the famous engraver, has put the materials before us together with much skill. The literary sketches which Bewick made of Hazlitt, Haydon, Shelley, Keats, Scott, Hogg, Jeffrey, Maturin, and others, are extremely bright, apt, and clear."—*Athenæum*.

**MODERN TURKEY.** By J. LEWIS FARLEY,  
Consul of the Sublime Porte at Bristol. *Second Edition.* 1 vol. 14s.

"Books on Turkey by impartial authorities are not very common, and we are always glad to welcome anything that gives us the most recent information, and appears to be written frankly and dispassionately."—*Times*.

"Mr. Farley has a good deal of interesting information to communicate in regard to the resources of modern Turkey; and we may add that he puts it briefly, clearly, and in an agreeable style."—*Saturday Review*.

MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S  
NEW WORKS—*Continued.*

**FREE RUSSIA.** By W. HEPWORTH DIXON. *Third Edition.* 2 vols. 8vo, with Coloured Illustrations. 30s.

"Mr. Dixon's book will be certain not only to interest but to please its readers and it deserves to do so. It contains a great deal that is worthy of attention, and is likely to produce a very useful effect. The ignorance of the English people with respect to Russia has long been so dense that we cannot avoid being grateful to a writer who has taken the trouble to make personal acquaintance with that seldom-visited land, and to bring before the eyes of his countrymen a picture of its scenery and its people, which is so novel and interesting that it can scarcely fail to arrest their attention."—*Saturday Review.*

**TURKISH HAREMS & CIRCASSIAN HOMES.**

By MRS. HARVEY, of Ickwell Bury. 8vo. *Second Edition.* 15s.

"Mrs. Harvey not only saw a great deal, but saw all that she did see to the best advantage. In noticing the intrinsic interest of Mrs. Harvey's book, we must not forget to say a word for her ability as a writer."—*Times.*

**SPORT AT HOME AND ABROAD.** By LORD

WILLIAM PITT LENNOX. 2 vols. crown 8vo. 21s.

"Lovers of sport will welcome this work eagerly. We may learn how to choose a yacht or a hound, a hunter or a rifle, from these useful and amusing pages. We predict a success for this book."—*Era.*

**MEMOIRS OF QUEEN HORTENSE, MOTHER OF NAPOLEON III.** Cheaper Edition, in 1 vol. 6s.

"A biography of the beautiful and unhappy Queen, more satisfactory than any we have yet met with."—*Daily News.*

**THE CITIES OF THE NATIONS FELL.** By

the Rev. JOHN CUMMING, D.D. *Second Edition.* 1 vol. 6s.

"The work before us contains much historical information of interest and value. We must applaud here, as we applauded in his treatise on *The Seventh Vial*, the skill and diligence of the author in the vast and careful selection of facts, both physical and moral, the interest of each when taken singly, and this striking picture of the whole when presented collectively to the view."—*Record.*

**THE SEVENTH VIAL ; OR, THE TIME OF TROUBLE BEGUN,** as shown in **THE GREAT WAR, THE DETHRONEMENT OF THE POPE,** and other Collateral Events. By the Rev. JOHN CUMMING, D.D., &c. *Third Edition.* 1 vol. 6s.

**THE EXILES AT ST. GERMAINS.** By the

Author of "The Ladye Shakerley." 1 vol. 7s. 6d. bound.

"The whole narrative is picturesque, graphic, and entertaining, as well as moral and pathetic."—*Morning Post.*

"The *Exiles at St. Germain's* is an excellent attempt to depict the life of the latter Stuarts while they lived under the protection of the Lilies of France. The author is that skilled penwoman who wrote 'The Ladye Shakerley,' and she has seized fully the spirit of the Stuart age. 'The Exiles at St. Germain's' will be every whit as popular as 'The Ladye Shakerley.'"—*Standard.*

**THE LADYE SHAKERLEY ;** being the Record of the Life of a Good and Noble Woman. A Cheshire Story. By ONE of the HOUSE of EGERTON. *Second Edition.* 1 vol. 6s.

"A charming novelette. The author writes gracefully, and has the faculty of placing before others the pictures her own imagination has called up."—*Pall Mall.*



# THE NEW AND POPULAR NOVELS

## PUBLISHED BY HURST & BLACKETT.

**BROKEN BONDS.** By HAWLEY SMART, Author of  
"Breezie Langton," "False Cards," &c. 3 vols.

**NATHANIEL VAUGHAN: PRIEST AND MAN.**  
By FREDERICK MACDONALD, Author of "The Iliad of the East,"  
"Xavier and I," &c. 3 vols.

**OUT OF COURT.** By Mrs. CASHEL HOEY, Author  
of "A Golden Sorrow," &c. 3 vols.

**VICTOR AND VANQUISHED.** By MARY CECIL  
HAY. 3 vols.

"A pretty story. The interest is well sustained."—*Spectator*.  
"A story of thrilling interest."—*Messenger*.

**COLONEL DACRE.** By the Author of "Caste,"  
"Pearl," &c. 3 vols.

"There is much that is attractive both in Colonel Dacre and the simple-hearted girl whom he honours with his love."—*Athenæum*.

"Colonel Dacre is a gentleman throughout, which character is somewhat rare in modern novels."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

**TRANSMIGRATION.** By MORTIMER COLLINS,  
Author of "Marquis and Merchant," &c. 3 vols.

"This book will exercise a fascinating power over its readers."—*The Hour*.

**ONE LOVE IN A LIFE.** By EMMA M. PEARSON,  
Author of "Our Adventures in the War," &c. 3 vols.

"The reader will follow with delight Miss Pearson's fascinating pages."—*John Bull*.

"There are many beauties in this story. The tone is elevating, and the descriptions of scenery and society are excellent. In fine, the work is entitled to the best commendation."—*Daily Telegraph*.

**HUBERT FREETH'S PROSPERITY.** By Mrs.  
NEWTON CROSLAND. 3 vols.

"'Hubert Freeth's Prosperity' is a carefully executed composition. A high, healthy tone of moral teaching runs all through the book, and the story gains upon us as we continue it."—*Times*.

"A novel which cannot fail to please. It is pure and elevated in feeling, good in style; the incidents are interesting, and each character has a distinct and well-sustained individuality."—*Daily News*.

"A very graphic tale, of sustained interest."—*John Bull*.

**FROM BIRTH TO BRIDAL.** By Mrs. DAY. 3 v.

"A really good novel—one which deserves very high praise. For a first novel, it is the most equally sustained in literary qualities, and the most intellectually harmonious we have ever read."—*Examiner*.

"This is a wholesome and pleasant novel. The heroine is an original character, quite natural, and very charming."—*Spectator*.

**CROWN HARDEN.** By Mrs. FULLER. 3 vols.

"An agreeable novel. It has many merits."—*Morning Post*.

"The place we should assign to 'Crown-Harden' in the ranks of novels would be to place it in the same category as the works of Miss Edgeworth. It is a pure domestic story, abounding in stirring incidents, related in a lively and lady-like manner."—*Court Express*.

# THE NEW AND POPULAR NOVELS

## PUBLISHED BY HURST & BLACKETT.

**THE BLUE RIBBON.** By the Author of "St. Olavo's," "Janita's Cross," &c. 3 vols.

"An unquestionably interesting story. We like 'The Blue Ribbon' very much."—*Spectator*.

"An admirable story. The character of the heroine is original and skilfully worked out, and an interest is cast around her which never flags. The sketches of society in a cathedral city are very vivid and amusing."—*Post*.

"The very best work the author has yet given us. It is strong in its plot, which is admirably worked out, and careful in discrimination and portraiture of character. It is one of the best novels of the season."—*English Independent*.

"The reader will be both pleased and interested in this story. It abounds in picturesque sketches of incident and character, in natural, healthy dialogue, touches of pathos, and quiet good sense, which will surely make it popular."—*Standard*.

**LOTTIE DARLING.** By J. C. JEAFFRESON, Author of "A Woman in Spite of Herself," &c. *Second Edition*.

"In 'Lottie Darling' Mr. Jeaffreson has achieved a triumph. It is a capital novel, as sparkling as it is original, as powerful as it is amusing. It is healthy in tone, interesting from beginning to end, and contains sketches of life and character unusually vivid and well drawn."—*Morning Post*.

"This story is well told. It opens up a phase of life hitherto untouched by any novelist."—*Daily News*.

**HER FACE WAS HER FORTUNE.** By F. W. ROBINSON, Author of "Grandmother's Money," &c. 3 vols.

"A very clever novel. The interest is admirably kept up."—*Athenæum*.

"The story is extremely interesting. It abounds with startling surprises, striking situations, and exciting incidents."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

**THE THREE OXONIANS.** By FRANK USHER. 3 v.

"The Three Oxonians' contains much capital reading. There is a great deal of dash and go in the story."—*Times*.

"The incidents are all very well told, and the interest well sustained."—*Post*.

**MONSIEUR MAURICE, A NEW NOVELETTE,** and other Tales. By AMELIA B. EDWARDS, Author of "Barbara's History," &c. 3 vols.

"The whole story of 'Monsieur Maurice' is very tenderly and gracefully written—nor is the interest of the other stories inferior to 'Monsieur Maurice.'"—*Times*.

"Miss Edwards is one of our best writers of novelettes. The tales in these volumes are as good as those in 'Miss Carew,' which is high praise."—*Athenæum*.

"These sparkling, clever stories are bright, healthy, and amusing to the last—abounding with touches of pathos and lively incident."—*Standard*.

**PENRUDDOCKE.** By HAMILTON AIDÉ, Author of "Rita," "The Marstons," &c. 3 vols.

"A clever and interesting book. The characters are all hit off with ease and dash, and the dialogues are smart and pointed."—*Saturday Review*.

**LILIAN'S PENANCE.** By the Author of "Recommended to Mercy," "First in the Field," &c. 3 vols.

"A remarkably well written and attractive novel. Much credit is due to the author for the clever and original way in which the plot is revealed."—*John Bull*.

**THE WRONG MAN.** By the HON. MRS. MONTGOMERY. 2 vols.

"This story is written with good taste and refinement."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

## Under the Especial Patronage of Her Majesty.

*Published annually, in One Vol., royal 8vo, with the Arms beautifully engraved, handsomely bound, with gilt edges, price 31s. 6d.*

# LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE, CORRECTED BY THE NOBILITY.

THE FORTY-THIRD EDITION FOR 1874 IS NOW READY.

LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE is acknowledged to be the most complete, as well as the most elegant, work of the kind. As an established and authentic authority on all questions respecting the family histories, honours, and connections of the titled aristocracy, no work has ever stood so high. It is published under the especial patronage of Her Majesty, and is annually corrected throughout, from the personal communications of the Nobility. It is the only work of its class in which, *the type being kept constantly standing*, every correction is made in its proper place to the date of publication, an advantage which gives it supremacy over all its competitors. Independently of its full and authentic information respecting the existing Peers and Baronets of the realm, the most sedulous attention is given in its pages to the collateral branches of the various noble families, and the names of many thousand individuals are introduced, which do not appear in other records of the titled classes. For its authority, correctness, and facility of arrangement, and the beauty of its typography and binding, the work is justly entitled to the place it occupies on the tables of Her Majesty and the Nobility.

### LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

Historical View of the Peerage.	The Archbishops and Bishops of England, Ireland, and the Colonies.
Parliamentary Roll of the House of Lords.	The Baronetage alphabetically arranged.
English, Scotch, and Irish Peers, in their orders of Precedence.	Alphabetical List of Surnames assumed by members of Noble Families.
Alphabetical List of Peers of Great Britain and the United Kingdom, holding superior rank in the Scotch or Irish Peerage.	Alphabetical List of the Second Titles of Peers, usually borne by their Eldest Sons.
Alphabetical list of Scotch and Irish Peers, holding superior titles in the Peerage of Great Britain and the United Kingdom.	Alphabetical Index to the Daughters of Dukes, Marquises, and Earls, who, having married Commoners, retain the title of Lady before their own Christian and their Husband's Surnames.
A Collective list of Peers, in their order of Precedence.	Alphabetical Index to the Daughters of Viscounts and Barons, who, having married Commoners, are styled Honourable Mrs.; and, in case of the husband being a Baronet or Knight, Honourable Lady.
Table of Precedency among Men.	Mottoes alphabetically arranged and translated.
Table of Precedency among Women.	
The Queen and the Royal Family.	
Peers of the Blood Royal.	
The Peerage, alphabetically arranged.	
Families of such Extinct Peers as have left Widows or Issue.	
Alphabetical List of the Surnames of all the Peers.	

"A work which corrects all errors of former works. It is a most useful publication. We are happy to bear testimony to the fact that scrupulous accuracy is a distinguishing feature of this book."—*Times*.

"Lodge's Peerage must supersede all other works of the kind, for two reasons: first, it is on a better plan; and secondly, it is better executed. We can safely pronounce it to be the readiest, the most useful, and exactest of modern works on the subject."—*Spectator*.

"A work of great value. It is the most faithful record we possess of the aristocracy of the day."—*Post*.

"The best existing, and, we believe, the best possible Peerage. It is the standard authority on the subject."—*Standard*.

# HURST & BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

## OF CHEAP EDITIONS OF POPULAR MODERN WORKS,

ILLUSTRATED BY MILLAIS, HOLMAN HUNT, LEECH, BIRKET FOSTER,  
JOHN GILBERT, TENNIEL, SANDYS, E. HUGHES, &c.

Each in a Single Volume, elegantly printed, bound, and illustrated, price 5s.

### I.—SAM SLICK'S NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE.

"The first volume of Messrs. Hurst and Blackett's Standard Library of Cheap Editions forms a very good beginning to what will doubtless be a very successful undertaking. 'Nature and Human Nature' is one of the best of Sam Slick's witty and humorous productions, and is well entitled to the large circulation which it cannot fail to obtain in its present convenient and cheap shape. The volume combines with the great recommendations of a clear, bold type, and good paper, the lesser but attractive merits of being well illustrated and elegantly bound."—*Post*.

### II.—JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN.

"This is a very good and a very interesting work. It is designed to trace the career from boyhood to age of a perfect man—a Christian gentleman; and it abounds in incident both well and highly wrought. Throughout it is conceived in a high spirit, and written with great ability. This cheap and handsome new edition is worthy to pass freely from hand to hand as a gift book in many households."—*Examiner*.

"The new and cheaper edition of this interesting work will doubtless meet with great success. John Halifax, the hero of this most beautiful story, is no ordinary hero, and this his history is no ordinary book. It is a full-length portrait of a true gentleman, one of nature's own nobility. It is also the history of a home, and a thoroughly English one. The work abounds in incident, and is full of graphic power and true pathos. It is a book that few will read without becoming wiser and better."—*Scotsman*.

### III.—THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS.

BY ELIOT WARBURTON.

"Independent of its value as an original narrative, and its useful and interesting information, this work is remarkable for the colouring power and play of fancy with which its descriptions are enlivened. Among its greatest and most lasting charms is its reverent and serious spirit."—*Quarterly Review*.

### IV.—NATHALIE. By JULIA KAVANAGH.

"'Nathalie' is Miss Kavanagh's best imaginative effort. Its manner is gracious and attractive. Its matter is good. A sentiment, a tenderness, are commanded by her which are as individual as they are elegant."—*Athenaeum*.

### V.—A WOMAN'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"A book of sound counsel. It is one of the most sensible works of its kind, well-written, true-hearted, and altogether practical. Whoever wishes to give advice to a young lady may thank the author for means of doing so."—*Examiner*.

### VI.—ADAM GRAEME. By MRS. OLIPHANT.

"A story awakening genuine emotions of interest and delight by its admirable pictures of Scottish life and scenery. The author sets before us the essential attributes of Christian virtue, their deep and silent workings in the heart, and their beautiful manifestations in life, with a delicacy, power, and truth which can hardly be surpassed."—*Post*

### VII.—SAM SLICK'S WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES.

"The reputation of this book will stand as long as that of Scott's or Bulwer's Novels. Its remarkable originality and happy descriptions of American life still continue the subject of universal admiration. The new edition forms a part of Messrs. Hurst and Blackett's Cheap Standard Library, which has included some of the very best specimens of light literature that ever have been written."—*Messenger*.

# HURST & BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

(CONTINUED.)

## VIII.—CARDINAL WISEMAN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAST FOUR POPES.

"A picturesque book on Rome and its ecclesiastical sovereigns, by an eloquent Roman Catholic. Cardinal Wiseman has treated a special subject with so much geniality, that his recollections will excite no ill-feeling in those who are most conscientiously opposed to every idea of human infallibility represented in Papal domination."—*Athenæum*.

## IX.—A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"In 'A Life for a Life' the author is fortunate in a good subject, and has produced a work of strong effect."—*Athenæum*.

## X.—THE OLD COURT SUBURB. By LEIGH HUNT.

"A delightful book, that will be welcome to all readers, and most welcome to those who have a love for the best kinds of reading."—*Examiner*.

"A more agreeable and entertaining book has not been published since Boswell produced his reminiscences of Johnson."—*Observer*.

## XI.—MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS.

"We recommend all who are in search of a fascinating novel to read this work for themselves. They will find it well worth their while. There are a freshness and originality about it quite charming."—*Athenæum*.

## XII.—THE OLD JUDGE. By SAM SLICK.

"The publications included in this Library have all been of good quality; many give information while they entertain, and of that class the book before us is a specimen. The manner in which the Cheap Editions forming the series is produced, deserves especial mention. The paper and print are unexceptionable; there is a steel engraving in each volume, and the outsides of them will satisfy the purchaser who likes to see books in handsome uniform."—*Examiner*.

## XIII.—DARIEN. By ELIOT WARBURTON.

"This last production of the author of 'The Crescent and the Cross' has the same elements of a very wide popularity. It will please its thousands."—*Globe*.

## XIV.—FAMILY ROMANCE; OR, DOMESTIC ANNALS OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

BY SIR BERNARD BURKE, ULSTER KING OF ARMS.

"It were impossible to praise too highly this most interesting book. It ought to be found on every drawing-room table."—*Standard*.

## XV.—THE LAIRD OF NORLAW. By MRS. OLIPHANT.

"The 'Laird of Norlaw' fully sustains the author's high reputation."—*Sunday Times*.

## XVI.—THE ENGLISHWOMAN IN ITALY.

"We can praise Mrs. Gretton's book as interesting, unexaggerated, and full of opportune instruction."—*Times*.

## XVII.—NOTHING NEW.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"'Nothing New' displays all those superior merits which have made 'John Halifax' one of the most popular works of the day."—*Post*.

## XVIII.—FREER'S LIFE OF JEANNE D'ALBRET.

"Nothing can be more interesting than Miss Freer's story of the life of Jeanne D'Albret, and the narrative is as trustworthy as it is attractive."—*Post*.

## XIX.—THE VALLEY OF A HUNDRED FIRES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS."

"If asked to classify this work, we should give it a place between 'John Halifax' and 'The Cartons'."—*Standard*.

# HURST & BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

## XX.—THE ROMANCE OF THE FORUM.

BY PETEIL BURKE, SERGEANT AT LAW.

"A work of singular interest, which can never fail to charm. The present cheap and elegant edition includes the true story of the Colleen Bawn."—*Illustrated News*.

## XXI.—ADELE. By JULIA KAVANAGH.

"'Adele' is the best work we have read by Miss Kavanagh; it is a charming story, full of delicate character-painting."—*Athenæum*.

## XXII.—STUDIES FROM LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"These 'Studies from Life' are remarkable for graphic power and observation. The book will not diminish the reputation of the accomplished author."—*Saturday Review*.

## XXIII.—GRANDMOTHER'S MONEY.

"We commend 'Grandmother's Money' to readers in search of a good novel. The characters are true to human nature, and the story is interesting."—*Athenæum*.

## XXIV.—A BOOK ABOUT DOCTORS.

BY J. C. JEAFFRESON.

"A delightful book."—*Athenæum*. "A book to be read and re-read; fit for the study as well as the drawing-room table and the circulating library."—*Lancel*.

## XXV.—NO CHURCH.

"We advise all who have the opportunity to read this book."—*Athenæum*.

## XXVI.—MISTRESS AND MAID.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"A good wholesome book, gracefully written, and as pleasant to read as it is instructive."—*Athenæum*. "A charming tale charmingly told."—*Standard*.

## XXVII.—LOST AND SAVED. By HON. MRS. NORTON.

"'Lost and Saved' will be read with eager interest. It is a vigorous novel."—*Times*.

"A novel of rare excellence. It is Mrs. Norton's best prose work."—*Examiner*.

## XXVIII.—LES MISERABLES. By VICTOR HUGO.

AUTHORISED COPYRIGHT ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

"The merits of 'Les Misérables' do not merely consist in the conception of it as a whole; it abounds with details of unequalled beauty. M. Victor Hugo has stamped upon every page the hall-mark of genius."—*Quarterly Review*.

## XXIX.—BARBARA'S HISTORY.

BY AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

"It is not often that we light upon a novel of so much merit and interest as 'Barbara's History.' It is a work conspicuous for taste and literary culture. It is a very graceful and charming book, with a well-managed story, clearly-cut characters, and sentiments expressed with an exquisite elocution. It is a book which the world will like."—*Times*.

## XXX.—LIFE OF THE REV. EDWARD IRVING.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

"A good book on a most interesting theme."—*Times*.

"A truly interesting and most affecting memoir. Irving's Life ought to have a niche in every gallery of religious biography. There are few lives that will be fuller of instruction, interest, and consolation."—*Saturday Review*.

## XXXI.—ST. OLAVE'S.

"This charming novel is the work of one who possesses a great talent for writing, as well as experience and knowledge of the world."—*Athenæum*.

## XXXII.—SAM SLICK'S AMERICAN HUMOUR.

"Dip where you will into this lottery of fun, you are sure to draw out a prize."—*Post*.

## HURST & BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

### XXXIII.—CHRISTIAN'S MISTAKE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"A more charming story, to our taste, has rarely been written. The writer has hit off a circle of varied characters all true to nature. Even if tried by the standard of the Archbishop of York, we should expect that even he would pronounce 'Christian's Mistake' a novel without a fault."—*Times*.

### XXXIV.—ALEC FORBES OF HOWGLEN.

BY GEORGE MAC DONALD, LL.D.

"No account of this story would give any idea of the profound interest that pervades the work from the first page to the last."—*Athenæum*.

### XXXV.—AGNES. By MRS. OLIPHANT.

"'Agnes' is a novel superior to any of Mrs. Oliphant's former works."—*Athenæum*.

"A story whose pathetic beauty will appeal irresistibly to all readers."—*Post*.

### XXXVI.—A NOBLE LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"This is one of those pleasant tales in which the author of 'John Halifax' speaks out of a generous heart the purest truths of life."—*Examiner*.

### XXXVII.—NEW AMERICA. By HEPWORTH DIXON.

"A very interesting book. Mr. Dixon has written thoughtfully and well."—*Times*.

Mr. Dixon's very entertaining and instructive work on New America."—*Pall Mall Gaz.*

"We recommend every one who feels any interest in human nature to read Mr. Dixon's very interesting book."—*Saturday Review*.

### XXXVIII.—ROBERT FALCONER.

BY GEORGE MAC DONALD, LL.D.

"'Robert Falconer' is a work brimful of life and humour and of the deepest human interest. It is a book to be returned to again and again for the deep and searching knowledge it evinces of human thoughts and feelings."—*Athenæum*.

### XXXIX.—THE WOMAN'S KINGDOM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"'The Woman's Kingdom' sustains the author's reputation as a writer of the purest and noblest kind of domestic stories."—*Athenæum*.

### XL.—ANNALS OF AN EVENTFUL LIFE.

BY GEORGE WEBBE DASENT, D.C.L.

"A racy, well-written, and original novel. The interest never flags. The whole work sparkles with wit and humour."—*Quarterly Review*.

### XLI.—DAVID ELGINBROD.

BY GEORGE MAC DONALD, LL.D.

"A novel which is the work of a man of true genius. It will attract the highest class of readers."—*Times*.

### XLII.—A BRAVE LADY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"A very good novel; a thoughtful, well-written book, showing a tender sympathy with human nature, and permeated by a pure and noble spirit."—*Examiner*.

### XLIII.—HANNAH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"A powerful novel of social and domestic life. One of the most successful efforts of a successful novelist."—*Daily News*.

"A very pleasant, healthy story, well and artistically told. The book is sure of a wide circle of readers. The character of Hannah is one of rare beauty."—*Standard*.

### XLIV.—SAM SLICK'S AMERICANS AT HOME.

"This is one of the most amusing books that we ever read."—*Standard*.





